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Party supremo faces existential crisis

A month from the May 4 election debacle that ended her 15-year hegemony in West Bengal at the hands of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Mamata Banerjee's legislative fortress is crumbling. The 71-year-old three-time Chief Minister is facing a rebellion that threatens to push her out of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) calculus itself. Claiming to be the real TMC legislature party, at least 58 of the 80 party MLAs have elected Ritabrata Banerjee as their leader, securing recognition from the Assembly Speaker. The rebellion — akin to Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena model that the BJP astutely managed in Maharashtra — poses an unusual situation for Mamata. Since she quit the Congress and floated the TMC 28 years ago, she has quelled dissension with an iron hand. Not this time. The Raghav Chadha model of weaning away Trinamool's MPs may well be next. Till the day of the result, the TMC and its undisputed supremo exhibited an image of invincibility. To that effect, the swift dismantling of the party and the no-going-back defiance by sections of the rank and file come as a surprise. True to her nature, the feisty Mamata is not expected to give up without a fight on who the real Trinamool is. Under these circumstances, any possibility of self-inspection over the electoral defeat is unlikely. When survival is at stake, there is little chance of an objective overview of criticism regarding her style of governance, or nephew Abhishek's highhandedness and the importance given to him. That may not augur well for Mamata. As is the wont of Indian politics, TMC's shrinking fortunes is party-hopping time. Loyalty is a fickle commodity. Power is the presiding deity. A real concern is an Opposition that forgets its primary role and chooses to play along with the Suvendu Adhikari government.

MUSYAM SRINIVAS Appointed as BRS Party In-Charge for Uppal Division



“UPPAL , JUNE 5 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): In a move aimed at strengthening the party organization, improving coordination among cadre, and accelerating the resolution of public issues, Mushyam Srinivas has been appointed as the BRS Party In-Charge for Uppal Division under the leadership of Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy said that Srinivas should work with dedication for the party's growth, remain accessible to party workers, and play a key role in further strengthening the party in the division. “Expressing gratitude for the confidence reposed in him, Mushyam Srinivas thanked the MLA and party leadership for entrusting him with the responsibility. He said he would work in line with the party's ideals, serve the people, and strive for the welfare of party workers. “Srinivas further stated that he would live up to the trust placed in him, strengthen the party at the grassroots level in Uppal Division, and make every effort to ensure the party's success in the upcoming Greater Hyderabad municipal elections.

BJP URGED PEOPLE TO TURN “A TREE IN THE NAME OF MOTHER” INTO A MOVEMENT

“ Hyderabad, June 5 : BJP State President N Ramchander Rao today appealed people of Telangana and party workers to participate in the “Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam” program by planting a sapling in your mother's name in every household and contribute to the building of a green Telangana.” He was speaking to media at Mahabubabad after planting a sapling who arrived in Mahabubabad to attend a party's training programme. “ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a magnificent call to BJP workers and the people of the country for “Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam” (A Tree in the Name of Mother) to protect the environment and fill India with even more greenery, Rao said. He said that since Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the “Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam” (A Tree in the Name of Mother) initiative in 2024, more than 260 crore saplings have been planted across the country, marking a major step towards increasing India's green cover. “BJP state chief urged everyone to plant a sapling in their mother's name and become active participants in nature conservation. “Rao called upon everyone to move forward in the form of a movement, ensuring that every family in every village across the state plants at least one sapling in their mother's name. It is the responsibility of all of us to provide a clean and healthy environment for future generations by protecting nature and preserving ecological balance, he said.

Nine patients benefit as relatives of brain-dead men donate organs in Hyd

Hyderabad: Relatives of two individuals, Shek Pulsona (45) and Motaputhula Suresh (37), who were declared brain dead, have donated the organs of the deceased for needy patients under the state-run Jeevandan organ donation initiative.

MMC Formation a Historic Milestone; Construction of Office Building in Uppal a Landmark Development



Congress Leaders Inspect Proposed MMC Office Site at Bhagayath“UPPAL , JUNE 5 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Congress leaders have stated that the establishment of the Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation (MMC) will remain a significant milestone in the region's history and described the construction of the corporation's office building on the banks of the Musi River in Uppal Bhagayath as a historic development. “Under the leadership of Mandumula Parameshwar Reddy, Congress Party In-charge for Uppal Constituency, party leaders conducted an inspection of the proposed MMC office construction site at Bhagayath. The foundation stone for the new office building is scheduled to be laid by Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy on June 7. “Ahead of the groundbreaking ceremony, Thotakura Vajresh Yadav, President of the Medchal-Malkajgiri District Congress Committee, Challa Narasimha Reddy, President of the Ranga Reddy District Congress Committee, Mal Reddy Ram Reddy, Chairman of the Telangana State Road Development Corporation, and Shiva Charan Reddy, State Youth Congress President, along with other leaders, in-



spected the site and later addressed the media. “Speaking on the occasion, the leaders said that the people's government led by Chief Minister Revanth Reddy has introduced several reforms aimed at the development of Hyderabad. As part of administrative decentralization, the government has created three municipal corporations from the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) structure, they said. The leaders emphasized that the formation of the Malkajgiri Municipal Corporation was made possible through the special initiative of Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and would be remembered as a landmark decision in the region's history. They noted that the decision to construct the MMC headquarters on the banks of the Musi River in Uppal is a matter of pride for local residents. They further stated that the Chief Minister is making dedicated efforts to restore the Musi River to its former glory, and launching the MMC of-fice project along its banks at such a time reflects a visionary and historic approach to urban development. “Senior Congress leaders and party workers from Uppal, LB Nagar, and Medchal constituencies participated in the programme.

Here's a polished English news report version



“Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Inaugurates 4th Anniversary Celebrations of Praveen Dance Company“UPPAL , JUNE 5 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy inaugurated the 4th anniversary celebrations of Praveen Dance Company (PDC) as the chief guest at North Kamalanagar in Dr. A.S. Rao Nagar Division on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA praised the organizers of Praveen Dance Company for their efforts in nurturing young talent and promoting the arts. He stated that dance not only enhances creativity but also instills discipline and self-confidence



among youth. He commended choreographer Praveen for successfully running the institution for the past four years and for training numerous young artists. “Artists, students, and their parents who attended the event extended a warm welcome to the MLA. As part of the celebrations, Bandari Lakshma Reddy cut the anniversary cake and watched the dance performances presented by the students, encouraging them to continue pursuing their passion. Among those present were BRS State Leader Soma Shekhar Reddy, former corporator Kotha Rama Rao, BRS leaders Mahesh Goud, Akula Mahender, party workers, and several other dignitaries.

WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY CELEBRATED GRANDLY IN MAREDPALLY: M.L.A



SRI Ganesh Plants Sapling. “BOWENPALLY/JUNE 05/(INDIAN CHRONICLE)““On the occasion of World Environment Day, a grand sapling plantation drive was organized at Nehru Nagar Park in Maredpally. MLA Sri Ganesh, who attended as the chief guest, kicked off the initiative by planting a sapling. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said, “The Earth is our home, and nature is our source of life. To protect the Earth from ever-increasing pollution, increasing greenery is the only way forward. Safeguarding the environment is a moral responsibility for all of us. “He called upon the public to take up environmental protection as a movement starting now, ensuring that future generations can live healthily. “Plant a sapling today, and let us gift a



green and clean Cantonment to the generations to come.” he urged the residents of the constituency. People must not only plant saplings but also take responsibility for nurturing them until they grow into trees. The use of plastic must be reduced. Human survival will be at risk if the ecological balance is disrupted, which is why everyone must learn to respect nature.

The event saw active participation from Boyenpally Circle Deputy Commissioner Daku Nayak, Division Presidents Nagesh Yadav, Badri Yadav, Santosh Yadav, Vaishnavi Yadav, Srinath, Arvind Yadav, along with local leaders, colony residents, and environmental enthusiasts, all of whom planted saplings in large numbers.

Former Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen Conducts Extensive Tour in Beerappa Gadda Division“



---Calls for Strict Quality Standards in Sewerage Pipeline Construction Works“UPPAL , JUNE 5 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Former Corporator Bannala Geetha Praveen Mudiraj on Thursday inspected the ongoing sewerage pipeline construction works being undertaken at a cost of 27 lakh in Sairam Nagar Colony and Kalyanpuri Colony of Beerappa Gadda Division. She was accompanied by officials from the Water Works Department. “Speaking on the occasion, Geetha stressed that Water Works Department officials must remain present during the execution of the works and ensure strict adherence to quality standards, particularly during the construction of manholes. She urged officials to take all necessary measures to maintain the quality of the project and prevent any lapses in execution. “

She also requested department officials to closely monitor the contractor and ensure that road restoration works are taken up immediately after the completion of the pipeline laying works, so as to minimize inconvenience to residents. “Among those who participated in the inspection were BRS senior leaders Kokkonda Jagan, Muddam Srinivas Yadav, Balakrishna Goud, Banti Goud, Chinna, Muthyam Naresh, Sairam Nagar Colony General Secretary Sabir Basha, Subba Rao, Prasad, Basid Bhai, Kalyanpuri Colony Secretary Vikas, Engineer Ramulu, Lakshmi Rajyam, Srikanth, Basheer Ahmed, Ashwak, Vasantha, Lakshmi, and others.

Press Release by N V Subhash , BJP Chief Spokesperson & Media Incharge Telangana in Hyderabad on 05/06/2026

“State BJP Welcomes Centre's Consultative Approach on Delimitation Bill“Hyderabad, June 5: The Telangana BJP on Friday welcomed the NDA government's reported initiative to engage with various political parties on the proposed Delimitation Bill, describing it as a reflection of the Centre's commitment to consensus-building and cooperative federalism. “In an official statement, Telangana BJP Spokesperson and Media In-charge N.V. Subash said the Narendra Modi-led government has consistently demonstrated its willingness to engage with all stakeholders, including opposition parties, on issues of national importance. “The NDA government's outreach to regional parties, including those that have expressed reservations on the delimitation exercise, reflects its inclusive approach to governance. Unlike the politics of confrontation and division witnessed in the past, the BJP believes that meaningful dialogue and consultation strengthen democracy and lead to better policy outcomes,” he said. “Subash noted that delimitation is a significant constitutional exercise with long-term implications for democratic representation across the country. Given its importance, efforts to build a broad political consensus are both necessary and welcome, he added. “Referring to recent media reports, he said the Centre is expected to take forward discussions on the Delimitation Bill during the upcoming Monsoon Session of Parliament. According to these reports, the government has initiated consultations with several regional parties, including the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the Trinamool Congress (TMC), to understand their concerns and seek constructive engagement on the issue. “The willingness of the Union government to listen to diverse viewpoints once again demonstrates Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to democratic values and participative decision-making. Major national reforms become more effective when they are backed by wider political understanding and public confidence,” Subash observed. “He further stated that the BJP has always maintained that issues affecting the nation's democratic framework should rise above partisan politics. Delimitation is not merely a political exercise but a constitutional responsibility aimed at ensuring fair and equitable representation for citizens. “Expressing optimism over the ongoing consultations, Subash said the Telangana BJP hopes that all political parties will participate in the discussions with a constructive mindset and contribute towards evolving a broad consensus. “The nation expects political parties to place national interest above narrow political considerations. We are confident that through dialogue and democratic engagement, a balanced and widely acceptable outcome can be achieved,” he said. “The Telangana BJP reiterated its support for all efforts aimed at strengthening democratic institutions and ensuring fair representation while preserving the spirit of cooperative federalism and constitutional governance.

Drainage and CC Road Works Worth 84 Lakh Underway in Uppal Sai Baba Colony



“Former Corporator Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy Inspects Development Works“UPPAL , JUNE 5 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Former Corporator Mrs. Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy on Thursday inspected the underground drainage and cement concrete (CC) road works being undertaken at Sai Baba Colony in Uppal Division at a cost of ₹84 lakh. “The development works are being carried out in fulfillment of the assurance given during her recent visits to the colony, where residents had requested improvements to road and drainage infrastructure. The drainage project is currently progressing at a brisk pace and is expected to significantly improve civic amenities in the area. “Accompanied by local residents, Rajitha Parameshwar Reddy reviewed the ongoing works and urged officials to ensure that the drainage project is completed before the onset of the monsoon season. She also stated that the construction of CC roads in the colony will commence shortly. “Speaking on the occasion, she said, “We are committed to fulfilling every promise made to the residents. Our goal is to transform Sai Baba Colony into a model colony with improved infrastructure and better living conditions. “Sai Baba Colony President Lekkala Anji Reddy, along with Tummala Devi Reddy, Suresh, Ramachandra Reddy, Salla Prabhakar Reddy, Sunitha, Pramoda, Suvarna, Subba Reddy, Ganesh, Janga Reddy, Tatnam, Bhim Singh, Upender, Ramachandra, Mallikarjun, Narasimha Reddy, Lingampalli Ramakrishna, Lingam Reddy, Srikanth Reddy, Alugula Anil, Lakshma Reddy, Veerappa and several other residents participated in the inspection programme.

Why government doctors in Telangana are protesting over transfer process

Hyderabad: At the heart of the ongoing protests by government doctors in Telangana, which led to the suspension of outpatient services on Friday, are allegations that the State Health Department is failing to properly implement G.O. Ms.No. 38, which is an official framework issued by the Finance Department to regulate state employee transfers. Telangana Government Doctors Association (TGGDA) and Telangana Teaching Government Doctors Association (TTGDA) allege that the Directorate of Medical Education (DME), Directorate of Public Health (DPH), and Telangana Vaidya Vidhana Parishad (TVVP) are attempting to bypass the rules of G.O. Ms. 38 by introducing arbitrary guidelines. The TGGDA alleges that doctors who have served for years in rural or peripheral areas are being denied fair opportunities due to these sudden administrative changes.

Rom-Com Mohabbat Launched, MLA Naveen Yadav Unveiled First Look Poster That Grabs Attention



"A new romantic entertainer titled Mohabbat, starring Santosh Kalwacherla and Shreyasi Sen in the lead roles with ABS Production banner backing, has been officially launched today. The film is being produced by Afroz Shaikh, while Mak is directing the project and also providing the screenplay." "The grand launch ceremony was held on Friday in the presence of distinguished guests Chinna Srisailem Yadav and MLA Naveen Yadav. MLA Naveen Yadav sounded the clapperboard for the auspicious muhurtham shot, while producer Afroz Shaikh switched on the camera. Naveen Yadav also unveiled the film's first look poster, which has already started attracting attention." "Speaking at the media interaction organized by the film's team, the guests and makers shared their thoughts about the project." "MLA Naveen Yadav said, "I am delighted to be part of the grand launch of Mohabbat. I thank the team for inviting me to this special occasion. Producer Afroz Anna is encouraging new talent through this project. I understand the struggles and dedication of people working in the film industry. Despite numerous challenges, they continue to create and produce films. I wish everyone associated with Mohabbat the very

best. The film is being planned as a Pan-India release, and I hope director Mak achieves great success. I sincerely hope the movie becomes a big hit." "Director Mak (Saleem Malik) said, "Producer Afroz Shaikh has come forward to make Mohabbat without compromising on quality. I thank everyone who supported me throughout this journey. The film will be an emotional, youthful Gen-Z love story with strong contemporary appeal. We are excited to bring it before audiences across India very soon." "Producer Afroz Shaikh said, "Mohabbat is the first project under my ABS Production banner. I strongly believe the film will achieve notable success. Mak is a talented filmmaker, and I am confident that Santosh and Shreyasi will earn good recognition through this movie. I thank Naveen Yadav garu and Srisailem Yadav garu for gracing our launch event and extending their support." "Actress Shreyasi Sen said, "Mohabbat has all the ingredients that audiences look for in a complete entertainer. I instantly connected with the story and loved the script. This is my second film, and I am grateful to Mak garu and Afroz garu for giving me this opportunity." "Actor Santosh Kalwacherla said, "Afroz garu has immense passion for cinema, and our director Mak is an exceptionally talented filmmaker. Music plays a crucial role in a love story like this, and I am very happy to be working with music director Sunil Kashyap." "Story and Dialogue Writer Kalam said, "The story of Mohabbat has shaped up beautifully. I have written the story and dialogues, and the film is packed with strong emotional values that will connect with audiences." "Cast : Santosh Kalwacherla, Shreyasi Sen, Ajay Ghosh, Sathwik, and Others" "Technical Crew: "Producer: Afroz Shaikh"Banner: ABS Production"Screenplay & Direction: Mak"Executive Producer: Salim Shaikh"Story & Dialogues: Kalam"Additional Screenplay: KVR"Music Director: Sunil Kashyap"Director of Photography: YS Krishna"Lyrics: Bhashyasree"Choreography: Moin"Action: Joshua"Designs: MKS Manoj"Production Manager: Raja Sekhar"PRO: Sai Satish

Farmers' Association Leaders Decide to Welcome Chief Minister and Submit Memorandum on Bhagayath Farmers' Issues

"UPPAL , JUNE 5 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Leaders of the Uppal Bhagayath Farmers' Association have resolved to extend a grand welcome to Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy during his visit to Uppal on June 7 for the foundation stone-laying ceremony of the MMC Corporation office building." "At a meeting held on Thursday, the association leaders decided to submit a memorandum to the Chief Minister seeking the fulfillment of assurances previously given to Bhagayath farmers and requesting the implementation of pending development works to be undertaken by the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA)." "The farmers' representatives emphasized the need for the government to honor commitments made to the farming community and address long-pending developmental issues in the Uppal Bhagayath region." "Association leaders Dubba Narasimha Reddy, Mekala Shiva Reddy, Salla Raju Reddy, Gone Prabhakar, Salla Veera Reddy, and Mekala Madhusudan Reddy participated in the meet-



ing. They resolved to meet the Chief Minister during the MMC building foundation ceremony, welcome him on behalf of the farming community, and present a memorandum highlighting the implementation of promises made by the previous government as well as the development works to be taken up by HMDA in the Uppal Bhagayath area.

Vanamahotsavam Held at Khammam District Court Premises on World Environment Day.



Judges planted saplings in the Khammam District Court premises on the occasion of World." "Environment Day" District Principal Judge calls upon everyone to plant and protect trees." "KHAMMAM, 05 JUNE (INDIAN

CHRONICLE): "On the occasion of World Environment Day, a Haritotsavam (Green Festival) program was organized on Friday at the Khammam District Court premises. District Additional Judges, members of the Bar Association, and Forest Department officials participated in the event and planted saplings." "At 10:00 a.m the judges planted various saplings including guava, mango, gooseberry (amla), banyan, peepal, and pongamia trees. The Family Court Judge, Senior Civil Judges, Junior Civil Judges, and other judicial officers also took part in the plantation drive." "Members of the Khammam Bar Association executive committee, senior advocates, and women advocates attended the program in large numbers. Officials and staff from the Forest Department, including the Khammam Range Officer, provided saplings, tree guards, and fertilizers for the initiative." "Speaking on the occasion, the judges emphasized that environmental protection has become increasingly important in an era of growing pollution. They urged everyone to come forward with the slogan, "Let us plant trees – Let us protect the future." They stated that planting a sapling is not enough; people must also take responsibility for nurturing it until it grows into a tree. They expressed hope that courts would become centers of greenery alongside their role in delivering justice." "A Forest Department official stated that, as part of the Telangana Haritha Haram program, Environment Day celebrations and awareness activities would be conducted from June 1 to June 12. He added that the district has set a target of planting 5 million saplings this year. He described the participation of government institutions such as the District Court as a positive development and assured that the Forest Department would support the maintenance of the planted saplings for the next three years.

Here's a polished English news version

Uppal MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy Meets Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy on Housing and Revenue Issues" "UPPAL , JUNE 5 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): Uppal



MLA Bandari Lakshma Reddy met State Revenue, Housing, and Information Minister Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy at the Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Secretariat on Thursday to discuss

several development and public welfare issues related to the Housing and Revenue departments in the Uppal constituency." "During the meeting, the MLA brought to the Minister's attention various concerns affecting poor and middle-class families, including housing provision, resolution of pending housing-related issues, land-related matters, revenue concerns, and several public grievances received from residents of the constituency." "The Minister responded positively to the representations and assured the MLA that the issues would be examined carefully. He also stated that discussions would be held with the concerned officials to ensure appropriate action is taken at the earliest." "Speaking on the occasion, Bandari Lakshma Reddy reiterated his commitment to the development of the constituency and the resolution of public issues, emphasizing that he would continue to work tirelessly to ensure better services and welfare for the people of Uppal." "Former Corporator Kotha Rama Rao, BRS State leader Gandham Nageshwar Rao, and other party leaders were also present during the meeting.

Consumers Urged to Stay Alert Against Adulterated Tea Powder



"Hyderabad, June 05 (Indian Chronicle) : The Tea Board of India and the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) have advised consumers to remain vigilant about tea powder adulteration. Authorities warned that unauthorized dyes such as Bismarck Brown, Potassium Blue, and Indigo are sometimes added to tea leaves to artificially enhance their appearance, color, and weight, posing potential health risks. Consumers can detect adulteration by placing tea leaves in cold water or on moist filter paper. Genuine tea releases color gradually, whereas adulterated tea tends to release color immediately. Officials also recommended purchasing packaged tea from recognized brands that follow quality control standards rather than loose tea sold without proper packaging. Consumers have been urged to buy tea powder only from trusted sellers and to verify quality certifications before purchase.

Former MLA N.V.S.S. Prabhakar, Ex-Corporator Bandaru Srivani Plant Saplings as Part of 12 Years of Modi Government Celebrations

"UPPAL , JUNE 5 (INDIAN CHRONICAL): As part of the celebrations marking 12 years of the Narendra Modi-led government, a tree plantation drive was organized in Ramanthapur under the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" (One Tree in Mother's Name) campaign, following the directions of the national and state party leadership. The program was also held in observance of World Environment Day." "The event took place at the premises of Katta Maisamma Temple on Ramanthapur Main Road. Former Uppal MLA N.V.S.S. Prabhakar and former corporator Bandaru Srivani Venkata Rao attended as chief guests and planted saplings." "Speaking on the occasion, they emphasized that environmental protection is the responsibility of every citizen and urged people to plant and nurture trees to ensure a clean and healthy environment for future generations." "Party leaders and local residents, including Mutthineni Jagadish,



Thinderu Hanumantha Rao, Sankuri Kumar Swamy, Vemula Tirupatayya, Dayakar Reddy, Uppalayya, Swarna Shinde, Anjaiah Patel, and Chandramouli, participated in the program and contributed to its success.

Warangal Officers' Club Gets a Modern Makeover; Development Works Inaugurated by MLA Nayini Rajender Reddy

"Hanamkonda, June 5 (Indian Chronicle) : A host of new development works proposed at the Warangal Officers' Club were inaugurated on Friday by Nayini Rajender Reddy, MLA of the Warangal West Assembly Constituency." "Addressing the gathering, the MLA said that steps are being taken to further develop the Officers' Club with modern amenities and improved infrastructure to ensure quality services and enhanced facilities for its members. He assured his continued support for providing the necessary infrastructure and expanding facilities in accordance with the growing needs of the club." "Mr. Reddy expressed confidence that upon completion of the development works, club members would enjoy a more comfortable, convenient, and pleasant environment. He noted that the initiatives would significantly enhance the overall standards and appeal of the club." "The event was attended by



Officers' Club representatives, members, public representatives, and government officials.

Road Works Progressing Rapidly as per Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka's Directions

Khammam, Chintakani June 05 (Indian chronicle): "Road development works are progressing swiftly under the directions of Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka. BT road and jungle clearance works are currently underway on the link road connecting Nereda village to Lachagudem Stadium via Raghavapuram in Chintakani Mandal." "Speaking after inspecting the works, Dusari Gopala Rao said that the road had remained a rough mud track for several years. He stated that Deputy Chief Minister Bhatti Vikramarka, known for his commitment to the development of the Madhira constituency, had sanctioned approximately ₹5.60 crore for the construction of this road." "He expressed happiness that the long-pending demand of the people of Nereda village is finally being fulfilled and conveyed special thanks to Bhatti Vikramarka on behalf of the villagers." "Gopala Rao further noted that the new road will significantly reduce travel distance to Khammam for resi-



dents of Komatlagudem and Podduturu villages, providing better connectivity and transportation facilities." "Among those present during the inspection were Matta Ravi Shankara Rao, Supervisor Nagender, and others.

Everyone Should Plant a Tree in Their Mother's Name: BJP Leader Rangaraju Rukma Rao



"Khammam, June 05 (Indian chronicle): BJP State Executive Member Rangaraju Rukma Rao called upon every citizen to plant a tree in the name of their mother and actively participate in environmental conservation." "As part of the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" campaign, an extensive tree-

plantation drive was conducted on Friday in several areas under the Yedulapuram and Wyra municipalities of Khammam district. The program was organized under the leadership of Nelluri Koteswara Rao, with party leaders, workers, and beneficiaries of various central government welfare schemes enthusiastically participating in the plantation activities." "Speaking on the occasion, Rangaraju Rukma Rao said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given the inspiring call of "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" to the people of the country and BJP workers. He urged everyone to treat it as a social responsibility and make the initiative a grand success." "He expressed hope that the campaign would evolve into a people's movement across the state, with every village, household, and family planting at least one tree in the name of their mother and taking responsibility for its care and protection." "Rukma Rao noted that since 2014, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Central Government has given significant importance to environmental protection and has continuously implemented various initiatives to increase green cover across the country. He appreciated the government's efforts in planting over 260 crore trees nationwide, contributing to environmental balance and a greener India." "He emphasized that protecting nature and maintaining ecological balance are essential for providing future generations with a clean and healthy environment, adding that this is a collective responsibility of all citizens." "He also urged BJP leaders and workers to spread this message among the public and encourage greater participation in the campaign. Appealing to the people of Telangana, he called on everyone to actively join the "Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam" initiative by planting a tree in their mother's name and contributing to the creation of a greener Telangana.

How the Golden Temple feeds 1.2 lakh daily

Forty-two summers have passed since the dust settled over the complex history of June 1984, and today, as the community marks the anniversary of Operation Bluestar, the response from the heart of Amritsar isn't one of retreat, but a quiet, colossal resilience. Inside the sacred precincts of the Darbar Sahib, history doesn't just live in memory; it is answered daily by an open door and an open fire, with the number of devotees journeying here only increasing over the years, turning a continuous stream of faith into a roaring ocean that is most palpable within the walls of the Guru Ramdas Community Kitchen.

On any ordinary day, at least 100,000 souls sit shoulder-to-shoulder on simple mats, partaking in the langar (community kitchen), a sacred institution started by the fifth Sikh master, Guru Arjan Dev, who also laid the foundational stone of the Harmandir Sahib. As the intense summer vacations take hold, that daily tide swells, routinely touching 1.10 to 1.20 lakh seekers, notes an observant Satinder Singh Bajwa, Manager of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC).The philosophy undergirding the langar is as radical today as it was centuries ago: a mandate that king and commoner, across every caste, creed, and corner of humanity, must sit on the exact same floor and break bread together before stepping into the presence of the Divine. For the millions who traverse these marble walkways, the ritual remains unbroken.

The Architecture of GraceWithin the Guru Ramdas kitchen building, two spartan halls serve as the stage for this daily miracle. To sustain an operation of this magnitude, the SGPC has earmarked a massive budget of Rs 172 crore for the 2026-27 financial year to run community kitchens across all its gurdwaras. The lion's share is dedicated right here to the Darbar Sahib, where Bajwa reveals that roughly Rs 15 lakh is spent every single day, a figure that does not even account for the priceless, ceaseless stream of voluntary offerings brought in by the faithful. Inside the halls, the air is thick with the aroma of roasting flour and simmering spices. Sewadars (voluntary servers) move with practised, rhythmic grace down the long rows, serving nearly 5,000 devotees in a single, swift spell. The menu shifts with the sunrise, and occasionally, at a moment's notice, should a pilgrim arrive with a specific offering to share with the congregation.

The Symphony of SevaBehind the seamless execution is a workforce driven by devotion. The kitchen employs 22 professional cooks working in relentless shifts, supported by 495 SGPC staff members spread across three rotations. But the true soul of the kitchen rests with the 250 to 500 civilian volunteers who arrive at any given hour. These volunteers are permitted to immerse themselves in every facet of the labour, save for the actual cooking at the hearth. "The langar is cooked in three major spells a day," Bajwa explains. "While the first spell is being served, the fires are already lit for the next. We cook well in advance to ensure the grace flows without a moment's chaos."

From Monday to Friday, the kitchen transforms roughly 80 quintals of flour into sustenance, a number that climbs past 100 quintals as the weekend crowds arrive. On a routine day, 20 quintals each of pulses, seasonal vegetables, and rice are consumed. When the sweet kheer is prepared, it demands an astonishing 60 quintals of dry milk powder in a single day. "Our promise is a wholesome meal: a dal, a vegetable, rice, salad, and a sweet dish alongside fresh chapatis for every single serving," Bajwa says. "On auspicious occasions like Gurpurb or Diwali, the menu ex-

pands to include delicacies like jalebis."

Technology Meets TraditionThe kitchen bridges the ancient and the modern. Five massive chapati-making machines, the first of which was commissioned in 2005, whir consistently. Alongside the mechanical rhythm sits a sea of women volunteers, their hands moving in a blur to manually roll out nearly 2,000 chapatis an hour. Before these flatbreads reach a single plate, each one receives a delicate, reverent dab of pure desi ghee, applied with a soft cloth. Only desi ghee is permitted here, standing as one of the SGPC's highest material expenses.The same rich ghee gives life to the sacred Krah Parshad, consuming an additional 7 quintals daily. "Desi ghee is the very identity of Punjab," Bajwa says with quiet pride. "It ensures the food is both nourishing and deeply flavourful."While the kitchen utilises 120 gas cylinders on a standard day, tradition is kept alive via ancient clay hearths fuelled by 15 to 20 quintals of firewood.

At the entrance, arriving devotees collect a heavy steel plate, a spoon, and a bowl, part of a massive inventory of 15,000 utensils kept in constant rotation. As one hall empties, an army of 100 sewadars swiftly sweeps, wipes, and purifies the floors before the doors open to the next wave. The servers ask no questions and count no helpings; the food is as infinite as the grace behind it.Once the meal is finished, the clatter of steel echoes into the washing bays, where a dedicated force of 200 volunteers takes on the monumental task of cleaning. Here, amidst the steam and the water, corporate executives sit beside labourers, washing dishes in a quiet act of surrender, proving that decades after the trauma of conflict, the spirit of the Darbar Sahib remains unbowed, nourished by an ever-growing family of believers.

Daily Provisions Used	
Lentils (Dal):	Daily, 20 to 22 quintals of dal are prepared. On holidays, due to the increase in devotees, it can reach 25 to 30 quintals.
Flour (Atta):	Approximately 80 to 100 quintals of flour are used daily.
Vegetables:	Chopped and green vegetables require 35 to 40 quintals. In addition, chickpeas or other types of vegetables take up 8 to 10 quintals.
Rice:	Around 20 to 25 quintals of rice are prepared daily.
Kheer:	Both fresh and powdered milk are used to make kheer. Kheer is prepared using about 60 quintals of milk.
Desi Ghee:	Daily, 7 to 8 quintals of desi ghee are used in the langar (this does not include the ghee for Kara Parshad, which is separate).
Firewood:	Around 15 to 20 quintals of wood are used daily, and sometimes even more. About 120 gas cylinders are also utilised.
Roti-making machines	There are a total of five machines available for making rotis in the kitchen.
Small machine:	Prepares about 2,500 to 3,000 prashadas (rotis) per hour.
Large machine:	Prepares about 4,000 to 4,500 prashadas per hour.
	Hundreds of thousands of rotis are also prepared manually on a daily basis.

13 girls go ‘missing’ in Ludhiana, 11 FIRs lodged: Police say no evidence of kidnapping racket

GNS News Agency, June 5

There is no evidence of any organised kidnapping racket or criminal conspiracy behind several girl allegedly going missing from different parts of Ludhiana, and investigation in all the cases is ongoing, the police commissionerate on Friday said.In an official statement, the Commissionerate said that while certain reports circulating on social media had created concern, investigations indicate that the girls reported missing had not been kidnapped, abducted, or forcibly taken away by any individual or organised group.It said 11 FIRs involving 13 missing girls have been registered at various police stations across Ludhiana in recent weeks. Preliminary investigations suggest that most of the girls had left their homes voluntarily due to personal, family, or other individual reasons.

Police teams have been working continuously to trace the missing girls and as a result four have already been located and safely reunited with their families, read the statement.Citing examples, it said one case was registered at Jamalpur police station on May 27 after three girls aged 14, 15 and 16 went missing. Police later traced all three to their native village in Uttar Pradesh. According to investigators, the girls had left home voluntarily due to family-related issues.It said the remaining cases are being actively investigated through technical surveillance, field inquiries and coordination with other agencies. While no evidence of an organised crime network has emerged so far, police said all possible angles continue to be examined and expressed confidence that the remaining missing girls would also be

India-Nepal ties in focus as Khanal begins three-day visit

EMS News Agency, june 10Kathmandu: Nepal's Minister for Foreign Affairs Shisir Khanal will visit India from June 5 to 7 at the invitation of his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar, the government said on Thursday.

Khanal's visit comes amid a controversy triggered by Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah's remarks in the parliament. Shah said on May 31 that apart from discussions with India on a long-standing border dispute, Kathmandu was in touch with China and the UK as well. Two days later, New Delhi categorically rejected any role for third parties to resolve its boundary dispute with Nepal.

Announcing the dates of Khanal's India visit, the Nepal government on Thursday said in a statement that he will hold a formal meeting with Jaishankar in New Delhi. "The two sides will discuss matters of mutual interest, with a view to enhancing cooperation across key areas including trade, investment, connectivity, energy and people-to-people ties," it said.

traced and reunited with their families at the earliest.Meanwhile, the Punjab State Women Commission has taken cognisance of the matter. In a letter dated June 4, the Commission sought a detailed report from the Ludhiana Police Commissioner regarding the ongoing investigations by June 8.Among the cases under investigation, an FIR was registered at Sarabha Nagar police station regarding a 16-year-old domestic worker who reportedly went missing after leaving the house where she worked.On June 3, Daresi police station registered a case against unknown persons under abduction charges after an 18-year-old girl went missing. Earlier, on June 1, Jamalpur police station registered a case against a man for allegedly abducting a 14-year-old girl on the pretext of marriage.Similarly, on May 29, Ladhawal police station registered an FIR alleging that a 16-year-old girl was abducted after being lured with a promise of marriage. Another case was registered at Jamalpur police station on May 28, where an accused was booked for allegedly abducting a 16-year-old girl after promising to marry her.Police said investigations in all cases are continuing and reiterated their commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of citizens. Officials expressed confidence that the remaining missing girls would also be traced and reunited with their families at the earliest.The Commissionerate has appealed to the public not to panic or circulate unverified information on social media that could create unnecessary fear and anxiety. Citizens have been urged to share any credible information with the police and cooperate with the ongoing investigations.

As part of regular exchange of high-level visits, this one will further consolidate the enduring and multifaceted bilateral relations between Nepal and India, said the foreign ministry statement.The visit will be the first to India by a minister from PM Shah's government since it assumed office in March. Nepal's leaders have traditionally attached importance to early engagement with New Delhi, reflecting the close political, economic and people-to-people ties between the neighbours.

Earlier this week, the chairman of Nepal's ruling Rastriya Swatantra Party Rabi Lamichhane arrived in New Delhi and met Prime Minister Narendra Modi."I welcome and fully share his desire to work closely together for a shared and prosperous future. Nepal is a priority partner under our Neighbourhood First policy and we look forward to collaborating with the new government to elevate the special and multifaceted relationship between our two countries to greater heights," Modi said on X after the meeting on Wednesday.

Akal Takht Jathedar backs UK court’s life sentence for Sikh man

Days after a British court sentenced Vickrum Singh Digwa, a 23-year-old Sikh man, to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 21 years for the murder of 18-year-old student Henry Nowak, Giani Kuldip Singh Gargaji, Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Sahib, expressed his heartfelt condolences to Nowak's family.The Jathedar said that Digwa's punishment was justified and in accordance with the law for the crime he committed. He added that the legal process in the UK punished Digwa as it should, giving no special treatment to religious exemption, and the Sikh community agrees with the justice delivered.

"While it is necessary to punish offenders according to the law, attempts by certain forces to target the entire Sikh community over this incident, demand a ban on the Sikh article of faith, the kirpan, and engage in politics driven by hatred or racism appear to be part of a deep-rooted conspiracy," Jathedar Gargaji said. He also called upon all Sikh organisations in the UK to stand with Nowak's family and support them.Digwa was sentenced for murdering Nowak, who was returning home alone after a night out with friends on December 3, 2025. Prosecutors said Digwa chased the unarmed teenager and stabbed him five times, inflicting fatal injuries to his heart and lungs.Gargaji said that, according to information received through prominent Sikhs in the UK, the weapon Digwa used was a Pesh Kabz, a Persian dagger and not the kirpan. He stressed that according to

Sikh principles, Sikhs legitimately wear the kirpan to protect the oppressed and uphold justice, not to commit wrongdoing or injustice against anyone.Sikhs around the world are a peaceful, united, and law-abiding community. Whenever they reside, they contribute to the progress and prosperity of those countries while working for the welfare of humanity," he stressed, noting that the Sikh community prays daily for the welfare of all humanity and has earned global respect through its service to mankind.said that the relationship between Sikhs and the UK dates back nearly 200 years. "Sikhs fought alongside Britain during the World Wars and contributed significantly to the country's development through their hard work and dedication," he pointed out.The Jathedar said that certain elements were trying to exploit the Henry Nowak case for political gain by attributing the actions of one individual to the entire Sikh community. He appealed to communities in the UK, the government there, and Sikhs to continue living together in harmony and to identify those who are deliberately trying to create divisions, damage communal relations, and spread hatred or racism."The British government should keep a close watch on individuals and groups attempting to undermine social cohesion and communal harmony," the Jathedar said, appealing to media organisations and social media platforms to report on the matter based on facts and truth, rather than promoting hatred or prejudice against any community.

Mumbai teen allegedly lured through online gaming app, traced in Gujarat after police search operation

A 17-year-old girl from South Mumbai who allegedly left home with Rs 10.5 lakh in cash after coming in contact with a man through an online gaming platform was traced and rescued by Mumbai Police in Gujarat following an inter-state search operation.According to police, the teenager, who recently cleared her SSC examinations, lives with her family under the jurisdiction of Sir J.J. Marg Police Station. Her family is engaged in scrap and garment businesses.Investigators said the girl frequently used the online gaming application Ludo, which offers chat and voice communication features. During gameplay, she came in contact with a man identified as Ziyen Shaikh, with whom she allegedly developed regular communication.

Police said Shaikh allegedly claimed to be wealthy, told the girl he owned a bungalow in Jodhpur, Rajasthan, and promised to marry her. He allegedly persuaded her to leave her family and bring cash and jewellery from home.On May 16, the girl allegedly left her residence around 3 a.m. after taking Rs 10.5 lakh in cash. When family members were unable to locate her, her mother approached police later that day. A complaint was registered at Sir J.J. Marg Police Station at 5.03 p.m. under Section 137(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).A police team led by Police Sub-Inspector (PSI) Prashant Nerkar launched an in-

vestigation, analysing CCTV footage, digital evidence and technical inputs. Investigators traced the girl's movements from South Mumbai to Thane, where she reportedly spent the day shopping and purchased a new mobile phone.Police said a key breakthrough came from the teenager's social media activity. After allegedly being instructed to obtain a new SIM card, she attempted to do so but was unable to purchase one because she did not have her Aadhaar card. She later connected her new phone to a shopkeeper's Wi-Fi network, logged into Instagram and uploaded a photograph. Investigators used that activity to track her location and subsequently learned that she had boarded a private bus bound for Jodhpur.Following the lead, PSI Nerkar and his team travelled towards Gujarat while coordinating with the Gujarat Crime Branch. Police set up checks along the Surat-Vadodara highway and intercepted buses operated by the travel company identified during the investigation.According to police, more than 30 buses were searched over a period of four to five hours. The teenager was eventually located on one of the buses in Gujarat between 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. and was safely brought back to Mumbai.Police said the girl had spent nearly Rs 1 lakh on shopping and the purchase of a mobile phone before being traced.

Education minister directs ‘immediate’ drafting of law to curb arbitrary private school fee hike

educationThe proposed legislation will cap annual fee hike at 5 per cent and require schools that have increased fees beyond the prescribed 15 per cent threshold.Punjab Education Minister Harjot Singh Bains Thursday wrote to the School Education Department secretary, directing that the legislation to regulate private school fees and enforce transparency and accountability be drafted immediately.

The move came less than 24 hours after Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann announced that "the country's toughest law against arbitrary fee hikes by private schools" will be introduced in the next Assembly session. The proposed legislation will cap annual fee hike at 5 per cent and require schools that have increased fees beyond the prescribed 15 per cent threshold over the last three years to refund the excess amount collected from parents."Providing accessible and affordable education is the topmost priority of our government. More than 32 lakh students are currently enrolled in nearly 7,800 private schools across Punjab. These students and their families deserve robust protection and safeguards against arbitrary fee increases, alongside complete transparency in how these institutions operate," Bains said.

The minister said the decision has been taken under the Mann's leadership to curb profiteering in the education sector and ensure that private schools function in the inter-

‘Rs 150 crore spent in 1 day’: Sanjay Raut cries foul over Mahayuti’s unopposed MLC wins

A day after candidates backed by the ruling Mahayuti secured unopposed victories in five Maharashtra Legislative Council constituencies, Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut on Friday alleged that nearly Rs 150 crore was spent to engineer withdrawals and ensure uncontested wins.The BJP rejected the charge, calling it baseless, and accused the Opposition of trying to deflect attention from its inability to retain its own candidates.

Raut claimed that large sums of money were used to secure withdrawals in several constituencies. "Throughout the day, efforts to secure unopposed victories and the drama surrounding withdrawals cost at least Rs 150 crore in a single day. Opposition horses themselves came to the market and fixed their own price. The transactions that took place in Konkan, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and Pune are dangerous for democracy," Raut said.

Raut's remarks came after the withdrawal of nominations resulted in five of the 17 Local Authorities constituencies witnessing unopposed victories for Mahayuti-backed candidates.While NCP's Aniket Tatkar and Vikram Kakade were elected unopposed from Raigad-Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg and Pune, respectively, Shiv Sena's Ravindra Phatak was elected from Thane-Palghar, Shiv Sena's Dushyant Chaturvedi from Yavatmal and BJP's Arun Lakhani from Wardha-Chandrapur-Gadchiroli.Several Opposition candidates withdrew before the deadline, including Shiv Sena (UBT)'s Bal Mane in Konkan, NCP (SP)'s Shrikant Patil in Pune, and NCP (SP)'s Abhijit Pawar in Thane-Palghar.

'Mahayuti connects with people through trust, not money'Responding to Raut's allegations, BJP chief spokesperson Navnath Ban said the Opposition was making excuses after failing to keep its own leaders and workers together. "People are not retained through money but through

affection and human relations. Raut and his leadership have failed to retain both workers and leaders. The BJP and Mahayuti connect with people through trust, not money," Ban said.

He also questioned Raut over the Opposition's handling of the Nashik constituency. "If Sanjay Raut was the party's in-charge for Nashik, why did they not field a candidate despite having nomination forms? Before making allegations against others, he should explain what happened in Nashik," Ban said.

Rejecting allegations of horse-trading, Ban said Mahayuti enjoyed a clear numerical advantage in local bodies across the state and did not need to resort to such practices. "Mahayuti has the numbers. We have the support of the largest number of corporators, Zilla Parishad members and Panchayat Samiti members. We do not need horse-trading to win these elections," he said.Ban also took a swipe at the Opposition over a series of withdrawals and described the Maha Vikas Aghadi as a "Maghar Vikas Aghadi (Withdrawal Development Alliance)".

Withdrawals across the stateIn Raigad-Ratnagiri-Sindhudurg, Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate Bal Mane withdrew, paving the way for NCP candidate Aniket Tatkar's election. In Pune, NCP (SP) candidate Shrikant Patil and BJP rebel Pradeep Kand withdrew, enabling NCP's Vikram Kakade to win unopposed. In Thane-Palghar, NCP (SP) candidate Abhijit Pawar withdrew, resulting in Shiv Sena's Ravindra Phatak being elected unopposed.In Yavatmal, Congress candidate Sahebrao Kamble and independent Syed Farooq withdrew, clearing the path for Shiv Sena's Dushyant Chaturvedi. In Wardha-Chandrapur-Gadchiroli, Congress candidate Shailesh Kumar Agrawal and Independent Sudhir Kothari withdrew, leading to BJP's Arun Lakhani being elected unopposed



Religious structures razed in Faridabad for RRTS corridor; internet suspended, traffic diverted



GNS News Agency, June 5

The Faridabad civic body on Saturday carried out a major demolition drive in the city’s NIT (New Industrial Township), razing several religious structures, including a mosque and two temples, to clear the right of way for crucial infrastructure projects. The operation, led by the Municipal Corporation of Faridabad (MCF) acting on directives from the National Green Tribunal (NGT), began at 4 am amidst heavy police deployment. The structures demolished included a 700-square-yard mosque at Masjid Chowk in NIT-3 and two temples in the vicinity.

Municipal officials stated the action was necessary as these illegal constructions directly obstructed the alignment of the upcoming Gurgaon-Faridabad-Noida Namu Bharat

Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor and a proposed elevated road project. To maintain law and order and prevent the spread of misinformation during the sensitive operation, the Haryana Home Department ordered a temporary suspension of mobile internet, bulk SMS, and dongle services in the NIT area. The order, issued on May 29 by Dr Vandana Disodia, Additional Secretary, Home, under Section 20 of The Telecommunications Act, is in effect from 12.30 am to 10 pm on May 30. It applies within a 1-kilometre radius of the demolition site. The administration cited apprehension of tension, damage to property, and disturbance of peace as reasons for the shutdown. The order explicitly exempted voice calls, individual SMS, mobile recharge services, banking SMS, and broadband/leased line internet services to minimise public and commercial inconvenience. The police began barricading the area around Masjid Chowk at 2 am, completely restricting civilian and vehicular movement before earth-moving machines were deployed, a spokesperson said. In coordination with the security arrangements, the Faridabad Traffic Police have issued a comprehensive traffic advisory. Several key routes remain temporarily closed to the general public from 2 am on May 30 to 2 pm. These include the stretch from Metro Mod to ESI Chowk via Sainik Colony Red Light, and the routes from DCP NIT Office to Mulla Hotel and Chimani Bai Chowk (now Namaste Chowk). Commuters heading towards Gurgaon have been advised to use alternative routes:

Gujarat HC dismisses family’s plea seeking registration of FIR over ‘custodial death’



GNS News Agency, June 5

WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING the constitutional gravity of custodial death allegations and noting the “irony” that the violation of a Supreme Court mandate to register an FIR in cognizable offences affords no direct recourse to a writ court, the Gujarat High Court has dismissed a petition seeking registration of an FIR in the alleged custodial death of 70-year-old Zahiruddin Shaikh, who had been arrested by Ahmedabad police in connection with an allegations of cow slaughter. Justice D N Ray, while pronouncing the judgment in the petition filed by Shaikh’s son Tofik, held that the petitioner was bound to first exhaust statutory remedies under the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), before invoking the extraordinary writ jurisdiction in the High Court.

The 30-page judgment, made available on Friday, noted that “the moment there is an allegation against the police authorities which is brought before the police authorities, instead of registering an FIR which would lend credence to the version of the informant, the police authorities would simply investigate whatever else and in whatever manner it would choose, to stifle the inconvenient truth.” The court further weighed the legal position and noted, “I would have ordinarily thought that the most natural and effective remedy would have been a writ petition to implement the directions of Lalita Kumari...” Delving into whether “custodial death” could be “carved out as a special exception” to the statutory process to “redress a situation where Lalita Kumari (Supra) is not followed in letter and spirit”, the court accepted that while the Commissioner of Police “may be biased and partisan” in such cases, the presumption cannot be extended to the Magistrate. The court held, “I cannot automatically include the Magistrate to whom an appeal from the decision of the Commissioner of Police would lie, in the same bracket.”

Dismissing the petition, Justice Ray stated in the judgment, “It is ironic that even if a Supreme Court mandate is violated by the authorities, various Benches of the Supreme Court, relying upon Sakiri Vasu (Supra), a decision of a smaller Bench prior to the Constitution Bench decision in

Lalita Kumari (Supra), have said that the procedure laid down in the CrPc/BNSS has to be followed and the writ court should not be approached prior to that, solely because an alternative remedy exists in the statute.” The court had delved in detail into the 2013 precedent of Lalita Kumari as well as the earlier decision of the SC in Sakiri Vasu and the court applied the recent May 4 Supreme Court decision in the case of Sujal Vishwas Attavar vs State of Maharashtra, which reaffirmed that the extraordinary jurisdiction under Article 226 “ought not to have been invoked when alternative equally efficacious statutory remedies were available” and that “Article 226 is not a panacea for all grievances.”

In a further order after pronouncement, the ACP M Division, Ahmedabad, A B Valan, who was present in the court, confirmed on the record that CCTV footage from Vejalpur Police Station for the relevant period had already been seized by panchnama, all medical records had been collected, and call detail records of the deceased and three alleged police officers would be obtained from mobile operators within a week. Appearing for the petitioner, Advocate Rohin Bhatt argued that the allegations disclosed cognizable offences, making FIR registration mandatory under the SC’s Constitution Bench ruling in Lalita Kumari case. He had further submitted that “substantial pressure” had allegedly been exerted on the family to settle the matter, and that “local police investigating their own colleagues could never ensure a fair probe”. For the State, Public Prosecutor Hardik Dave had opposed the petition, contending that the complaint with senior authorities of Ahmedabad police was lodged only on May 22 by the petitioner, after the petition was moved before the HC. Dave had contended that the act demonstrated a “predetermined intention” to bypass statutory remedies. The state relied on a consistent line of SC decisions including the recent May 4 judgment – all holding that aggrieved persons must exhaust the BNSS framework, approaching the superior police officers under Section 173(4) and thereafter the Magistrate under Section 175(3), before invoking writ jurisdiction. Zahiruddin was arrested on May 18, after the Vejalpur Police claimed to have recovered 520 kg of suspicious meat and a live white calf during a raid conducted on May 5. Police had arrested nine persons in the case and alleged that the 70-year-old was the kingpin of the illegal cow slaughter operation. According to the petitioner, while in custody that evening, his father was allegedly subjected to physical assault and administered unidentified substances. The next morning, he was taken to Sola Civil Hospital, referred to Asarwa Civil Hospital due to non-availability of ICU beds and eventually admitted to SVP Hospital, where he collapsed and was declared dead on May 19. An accidental death case was registered the same evening. A panel of five doctors from B J Medical College conducted a postmortem on May 20. The family thereafter, refused to accept Shaikh’s body until the FIR was registered.

From clean classrooms to toilets: West Bengal schools told to complete reopening preparations



The West Bengal School Education Department has issued a set of instructions to ensure that the school environment, infrastructure, and quality of education meet the requisite standards before June 1. The state government schools will reopen on June 1 after the summer vacation. Instructions were sent to headmasters and teachers of all government and government-aided schools and district school inspectors to complete the preparations by May 31.

Sources said a meeting was held at the education department on Thursday to issue the memo to the heads of all Junior High Schools, Higher Secondary Schools, and madrasahs, to maintain a healthy, hygienic, and safe environment for students. According to the memo, all classrooms, school premises, benches, desks, chairs, tables, and other furniture in the school should be cleaned and kept in a usable condition. The school authorities have been directed to check whether the electrical lines, lights, fans, computers, and other equipment are functioning, and clear weeds or bushes from the school premises. As emphasis has been put on safe drinking water systems, the schools have been asked to clean water sources, reservoirs, and tanks to ensure pure drinking water for students. Instructions have also been given to keep the toilets clean and the drain-

age system functional. An order has also been given for the strict monitoring of mid-day meal services. These include keeping the kitchen, cooking utensils, and dining areas clean, checking gas cylinders and fire extinguishing systems, and ensuring the quality of food grains. According to sources, schools that have low or near-zero student enrollment have been asked to prepare a list and give the reason behind the low attendance to the education department.

SIR battle begins: Parties deploy booth armies across Maharashtra

With the Election Commission’s Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls scheduled between June 30 and July 29, political parties across Maharashtra have begun mobilising their organisations, from top leaders to booth-level workers, to ensure their voters remain on the rolls and to monitor the revision process closely. According to the Election Commission’s schedule, printing of enumeration forms and training of Booth Level Officers (BLOs) will take place between June 20 and 29, followed by door-to-door verification from June 30 to July 29. Draft electoral rolls will be published on August 5, while claims and objections can be filed until September 4. The final electoral rolls will be published on October 7. The BJP has directed its cadre to ensure that none of its voters are omitted from the electoral rolls while also scrutinising the lists for alleged ineligible entries. The party has already held multiple meetings in Mumbai and instructed district units to organise similar sessions. Earlier this month, state BJP president Ravindra Chavan chaired a meeting attended by around 700 party functionaries, including MPs, MLAs and office bearers. The BJP has also launched a door-to-door awareness campaign based on its Panna Pramukh model, asking workers to verify voter details family by family and map every society, com-

Telangana Police arrest ex-BRS MP after ‘burn govt offices’ speech goes viral



GNS News Agency, June 5

Telangana Police arrested former BRS MP Balka Suman for allegedly calling for “militant” activities that include “burning of government offices and breaking down rail tracks”. Suman was arrested from near BRS party headquarters — BRS Bhavan — Saturday afternoon. He was booked under relevant sections of Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act by the Nampally police. In a purported video that went viral five days ago, on May 25, Suman was seen telling the BRS cadre to burn offices. “Even if you go to jail for a month, it doesn’t matter,” he was heard telling the cadre in the Chennai constituency that he represented from 2018 to 2023.

Suman is believed to have been “unhappy” that farm-

ers were not turning up at BRS protests over procurement troubles, and was purportedly heard voicing it in the video, adding that it was “high time” for the BRS to launch “militant activities” to attract people’s attention. The Congress called the speech as “a militant move to destabilise and topple the democratically elected Congress government”. “This is not legitimate Opposition politics. This is a direct call to abandon peaceful democratic protest in favour of militant confrontation, damaging public property, disrupting law and order, and endangering innocent lives,” the Congress leadership said in a media release. A call to burn government offices crosses every line of responsible politics, the Congress leadership said in the release, questioning the silence from BRS leadership. “By not condemning Suman’s calls, BRS leaders, including KCR and KTR, seem to have given their tacit approval or consent,” the release said. Suman had later held a press conference to clarify his statement and state that it was not a public function, but an internal event of the party where he made the comments. “My words were misrepresented,” Suman said. Some BRS leaders too defended Suman. “Congress Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy had once said that Pragathi Bhawan (CM’s official residence) should be bombed. He (Suman) did not say anything like that,” a BRS leader told The Indian Express, adding that Suman’s speech was meant to motivate the BRS cadre and not to cause any harm to public property. BRS’s top leadership, however, remained silent on the matter. “The party has not issued any clarification,” said a BRS leader.

On fast lane, Dilip Ghosh rides superbike without a helmet, some in awe, others criticise



GNS News Agency, June 5

Panchayat Minister Dilip Ghosh turned heads on Thursday morning when he was spotted riding a luxury superbike without a helmet outside Eco Park in New Town. Cruising down the road with a pillion behind him, the senior BJP leader stopped to share his excitement, simply stating, “It was amazing”.

Taking to his X handle, the minister shared his firsthand experience of the high-end ride: “Today, I rode a Honda BigWing superbike. It is a high-speed 1800cc, 6-cylinder motorcycle. The bike is extremely comfortable and offers incredible speed. There is ample space at the back with a

sofa-like passenger seat, ensuring that the pillion rider can also sit very comfortably.” Never one to miss a political beat, Ghosh linked his premium ride to urban development. He said that Kolkata’s roads and footpaths, which faced heavy encroachment for years, making them narrow and completely unsuitable for heavyweight superbikes, are now ready for superbikes.

“With the BJP government now clearing roads and footpaths from encroachments, the younger generation will no longer face difficulties in riding these motorcycles,” he posted. He added that just as the new government is functioning at a rapid pace, the “speed of the city” and the efficiency of people’s daily lives will also see a massive upgrade. As expected, the video of the minister’s bike ride went viral almost instantly, racking up thousands of views, likes, and comments across social media platforms. Impressed by his confident riding style, a section of internet users dubbed him ‘Dabangg Dilip’. However, the viral moment also brought its fair share of scrutiny. Motorcycle enthusiasts on the Internet quickly pointed out that the premium Honda touring bike he was riding comes with a staggering price tag of Rs 53 lakh. Several netizens raised questions about the minister’s safety, asking why he chose to ride without a helmet.

HC stays notification extending Assam Tenancy Act to Chandigarh

Chandigarh The petition was heard by a division bench comprising Justices H S Sethi and Deepak Manchanda, which issued notice of motion to the respondents and sought their response. The Punjab and Haryana High Court has stayed the operation of a Central government notification extending the Assam Tenancy Act, 2021, to Chandigarh and directed that the East Punjab Urban Rent Restriction Act, 1949, continue to operate for the time being. The Bench ordered that the operation of the notification dated May 6, 2026, shall remain in abeyance till July 14.

The interim order came on a writ petition filed jointly by the Punjab and Haryana High Court Bar Association and the District Bar Association, Chandigarh. The writ petition challenges the notification dated May 6, 2026, under which the Assam Tenancy Act was extended to Chandigarh, resulting in the repeal of the East Punjab Restriction Act — in force in the city since November 4, 1972. The petition was heard by a division bench comprising Justices H S Sethi and Deepak Manchanda, which issued notice of motion to the respondents and sought their response.

Senior Advocate Chetan Mittal, assisted by Advocates Shifali Goyal and Ritvik Garg, appeared for the petitioners. They argued that the Centre had invoked Section 87 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act, 1966, which empowers the Central government to extend to Chandigarh a law in force in Punjab, but does not confer power to repeal, amend or substitute an existing law already applicable to the Union Territory. The petitioners contended that the notification was therefore unconstitutional. The petition also questioned the adjudicatory mechanism under the Assam Tenancy Act. It was submitted that Section 30 of the Act designates the Tehsildar as the rent authority and Section 33 designates the Additional Deputy Commissioner as the Appellate Authority or Rent Court. The petitioners argued that rent disputes in Chandigarh had traditionally been adjudicated by judicial officers under the 1949 Act and that vesting such powers in executive authorities had previously faced judi-



cial scrutiny. The bar bodies also contended that several provisions of the Assam tenancy law were impracticable for Chandigarh, and were inconsistent with the city’s planning and regulatory framework. They also raised concerns regarding the repeal-and-saving clause, arguing that while pending proceedings under the 1949 Act were protected, the notification did not clarify the legal position regarding fresh causes of action or subsisting tenancies.

Another plank of the challenge was that although the notification had come into force, the Rules under the new Act had not yet been framed. And the authorities and infrastructure required for its implementation had not been notified either. According to the petitioners, this had created a legal vacuum affecting the landlords as well as the tenants. After hearing the submissions, the court recorded prima facie satisfaction on the issues raised by the petitioners, including the contention that Section 87 of the Punjab Reorganisation Act does not confer a power of repeal. The court also directed that the East Punjab Urban Rent Restriction Act, 1949, would continue to govern rent matters in Chandigarh, noting the conceded position that the Rules under the Assam Tenancy Act had not yet been framed, the Rent Authority had not been notified, and the necessary implementation infrastructure was not in place.

extremely positive sign for us,” Abhijeet Sapkal, state convener of the Congress campaign on SIR, said. The party has appointed senior leaders, including Balasaheb Thorat, Satej Patil and Amit Deshmukh, as BLA 1 in their respective constituencies. They have been tasked with appointing BLA 2 workers at every booth. “We have named BLA 2 as Bharat Rakshak as they are the most crucial individuals who will ensure that no legitimate voter is deleted,” said Sapkal. The Congress has formed 75 training teams that will travel across the state between June 2 and June 10 to train booth-level workers. The Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena has launched a statewide organisational exercise, appointing more than 1.25 lakh BLAs to oversee voter verification and strengthen the party’s grassroots network. Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde has instructed MPs, MLAs, ministers and coordinators to actively participate in the exercise and ensure the party reaches every booth. During a recent review meeting, Shinde directed office bearers to appoint two BLAs in every constituency and conduct detailed reviews of voter lists. Party leaders said the BLAs would continue organisational work beyond the revision exercise. According to the party, Shinde also sought updates on appointments, constituency visits and meetings conducted as part of the campaign

Parkinson’s struggle meets AI innovation as London singer uses tech to finish new album



GNS News Agency, June 5

London: Samuel Smith spent years writing songs with a guitar in his hands. Now, the London-based singer-songwriter is using artificial intelligence tools to help him continue making Americana music after Parkinson’s disease largely took away his ability to play guitar. Smith, who was diagnosed with the progressive neurological disorder in 2020, recently released his second album, “The Art of Letting Go.” For one of the eight tracks, an instrumental piece titled “Horizon,” he relied on platforms that use AI to generate music to create demo arrangements that would convey his vision to the musicians who recorded the song. The demos he created by humming rough melodies into his phone and uploading the recordings into song generators like Suno and Udio weren’t for mixing into the final studio version of “Horizon,” Smith stressed. But tremors, stiffness and fatigue, which are common symptoms of Parkinson’s, caused his guitar skills to deteriorate during the more than a year he worked on the album, he said. “So then I’m faced with a question,” Smith, 49, said. “Don’t play, don’t be creative, or find a way out, find a route.’ And for me, this was the route.” Generative AI has divided the music industry, whose artists and record labels have complained of their copyrighted work being used to train the models behind AI-powered music tools. Sony Music Entertainment, Universal Music Group and Warner Records sued Suno and Udio in June 2024, although Universal later reached a settlement and partnership deal with Udio and Warner did the same with Suno.

Less discussed is what those platforms can do when employed by a serious musician like Smith, whose disease affects the tools central to his songwriting and identity as a guitarist: his hands. He released his debut album, “In the Springtime,” in 2023, saying he wanted to give his two sons a way to remember when he could perform and record music himself. “I’d always written, I’d also played, I always sung,” he said. “And immediately it became clear to me that I was in trouble, that my music was going to be seriously compromised.”

AI music generators use systems trained on large datasets of recorded music and audio. The platforms analyze patterns in melody, harmony, and rhythm before generating new audio based on prompts or uploaded recordings. Users don’t need musical talent to end up with a serviceable song, or even a popular one. Smith said producing convincing demos from the synthetic tracks the apps generated often required “50, 100, 150 attempts” and extensive editing “to get something that sounds close to my music.” After humming a song into his phone and uploading the recording, he gives prompts describing instrumentation, mood and style. “AI is not replacing anything for me,” he said. “It’s unlocking, it’s enabling. It’s allowing me to keep writing. I upload my lyrics; AI doesn’t create my lyrics. I upload my music; AI does not create my music.” He added: “It then brings it to life in a way that I can play to session players and say, Here, that’s what I’m thinking, that is what I’m hearing.”

The album was produced by Grammy-winning pianist

and producer Matt Rollings, who assembled a group of established roots and bluegrass musicians for the project. They included dobro player and 16-time Grammy winner Jerry Douglas, Grammy-winning banjo player Alison Brown, fiddler Stuart Duncan, guitarist Bryan Sutton, bassist Viktor Krauss and singers Jonatha Brooke and Glen Phillips. For Smith, the experience of singing in a Nashville studio alongside musicians he had admired for decades was “an extraordinary moment.” Grammy-nominated guitarist Julian Lage, known for his jazz and acoustic recordings with Blue Note Records, performed on the album’s title track and on “Horizon.” The latter recording became a bittersweet high point in Smith’s career; despite the progression of his disease, he managed to play a guitar duet with his friend. “I hadn’t been able to play for months, but I kept telling myself that if I wrote something to take to the studio, perhaps the clouds would part for a few minutes,” Smith said. “That’s what happened. I had a window of about 10 minutes in the studio when my arm freed up. ... So in the end, I was able to capture the last breath of my guitar playing.” Experts said AI-assisted music tools could benefit other people with disabilities or illnesses. Ruaidhri Mannion, a composer, music producer and sonic artist who teaches at Brunel University of London, said technology like affordable digital recording software “effectively democratized the making of music” in recent decades. By helping songwriters and musicians communicate ideas and collaborate more easily, AI tools that generate polished-sounding material from voice or text prompts could work in the same way, he said. “If these tools are able to enable people to be able to participate with other creative groups and encourage more people to feel confident to be able to reach out to an ensemble or an orchestra or something, then I think that is all for the better,” Mannion said. But an overreliance on technology could interfere with the trial and error, frustration and synergy that are necessary parts of a musician’s artistic development, Mannion said. “What makes a lot of music-making meaningful is the collaborative element,” he said. “There’s a lot of experimentation and development and failure that’s part of musical discovery.” Udio and Suno have denied copyright infringement allegations and said they wanted to work with the music industry, not in opposition to it. Some musicians are unconvinced. A group of recording artists and activists, including singer-songwriter Tift Merritt, David Lowery of the bands Cracker and Camper Van Beethoven, and ECR Music Group President Blake Morgan, published an open letter in February under the heading “So no to Suno.” “Many in our community are embracing responsible AI as a tool for creation, and as a means for fans to explore and interact with our artistry. That’s wonderful,” the letter read. “But it’s not the same as creating an environment where AI-generated works sourced from our music are mass distributed to dilute our royalties or, worse yet, reward those actively seeking to commit fraud. Artists need to know the difference.” Smith said he thinks his experience demonstrated how AI could benefit society and expand creative access, if it’s developed responsibly.

“My message would be that if these companies want to show they’ve got a place, a role in society, then step up,” Smith said. “Engage with health professionals, engage with music therapists, engage with society and show us what you can do.” On May 21, Smith collaborated with the Berklee Music and Health Institute for an event in New York that brought together music industry leaders, researchers and clinicians to examine how music can support people living with neurological conditions. Smith discussed his experience living with Parkinson’s and sang again alongside musicians who played on “The Art of Letting Go.” Creating music is crucial to the legacy Smith hopes to leave for his children, ages 4 and 17. “My 4-year-old is probably never going to remember me playing, and it’s heartbreaking,” he said. “But I’ve been able to pull this into something and refuse to be defined by this disease.”

Tiffany Trump visits Taj Mahal with husband Michael Boulos

GNS News Agency, June 5

Agra (UP): American President Donald Trump’s daughter Tiffany visited the iconic Taj Mahal with her husband Michael Boulos on Saturday and spent about an hour exploring the monument, officials said. Trump arrived at the Taj Mahal around 11 am along with Boulos and a few close friends. During her visit, she extensively toured the monument and clicked pictures at various locations within the complex.

Tourist guide Ramesh Diwan said she showed keen interest in the history and architecture of the monument and asked several questions about its construction. After completing the visit, Trump praised the beauty of the monument, according to people present during the tour. Police said she arrived in Agra from Delhi by a chartered aircraft and landed at the city’s Agra Airport. She then travelled by road to a hotel before proceeding to the Taj Mahal through the golf course route. Elaborate security arrangements were made for the high-profile visit, with authorities creating a high-security corridor from the airport to the Taj Mahal. Additional police personnel were deployed along the route and around



the monument, police said. After visiting the Taj Mahal, Trump returned to her hotel with her husband. The couple is scheduled to stay overnight in Agra and then carry on with the rest of their India trip, officials said.

Crude oil prices hit six-week low amid Iran-US ceasefire hopes



GNS News Agency, June 5

New Delhi: Global crude oil prices fell to six week lows over the weekend after reports came that the United States and Iran had tentatively agreed to extend a ceasefire and that the Strait of Hormuz could soon reopen. US West Texas Intermediate (July delivery) settled down 1.73 per cent at \$87.36 a barrel, while international oil benchmark Brent crude (August contract) fell 1.7 per cent to close at \$91.12 this week. US President Donald Trump said he would make a final determination on a preliminary deal to prolong the

truce for 60 days, while Iran’s Foreign Ministry said no final understanding had been reached and that message exchanges were continuing, as per reports. The risk premium on crude faded in July amid growing hopes of a diplomatic de-escalation, though analysts warned significant obstacles remain before oil flows through Hormuz can be fully resumed. Removal of mines in the Hormuz waterway, delay in restarting shut-in fields, and damage to energy infrastructure from drone and missile strikes could cause a delay in the full flow of energy supplies. Nissos Keros — a Marshall Islands flagged crude oil tanker carrying approximately 270,000 MT of crude oil cargo for India — safely crossed the Strait of Hormuz and is expected to arrive at Visakhapatnam on June 3, an official statement said. All oil refineries in the country are operating at high capacity with adequate crude inventories, while sufficient stocks of petrol and diesel are being maintained. Domestic LPG production from refineries has been increased to about 52 TMT/day to support domestic consumption. In addition, the government has asked states to monitor and review district wise diesel and petrol offtake patterns, intensify inspections and enforcement activities in vulnerable areas and along major transportation or industrial corridors to prevent unauthorised procurement of diesel through retail outlets by industrial .

Senate Republicans face a political knife-edge over Trump's 'anti-weaponization' fund



WASHINGTON, Senate Republicans face a stark choice when they return from recess next week: back President Donald Trump’s controversial \$1.8 billion “anti-weaponization” fund to benefit his political allies or defy a commander-in-chief who just ended the careers of two Republican senators. Nearly half of the 53-member Republican Senate majority balked at the issue during a heated two-hour meeting with Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche before the week-long Memorial Day break, forcing leadership to suspend plans to pass a \$72 billion partisan bill to fund Trump’s immigration crackdown through the end of his presidency.

Jumpstart your morning with the latest legal news delivered straight to your inbox from The Daily Docket newsletter. Sign up here. With Republican leaders now poised to vote on the measure to fund U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and Border Patrol, the party is pressing Trump’s Justice Department to agree on guardrails that could defuse Democratic plans to force repeated votes on amendments to derail the fund and embarrass the president. “I would hope that Senate leadership is working with the administration and the Department of Justice to design something that’s going to work,” said Senator Ron Johnson, a Wisconsin conservative who says he fully supports the fund. “My suggestion was, come up with a overriding amendment that will render all their amendments moot.”

The fund, which would compensate victims of political “weaponization” with taxpayer money, emerged from a legal settlement between Trump’s Justice Department and the Internal Revenue Service to resolve an unprecedented lawsuit in which the president had sought \$10 billion over the alleged mishandling of his tax records. NO ONE THINKS THIS IS A WINNING ISSUE The announcement set off a firestorm of criticism, with lawmakers raising concerns about potential self-dealing by Trump, and the prospect of payouts to violent Trump supporters who stormed the U.S. Capitol and assaulted police on January 6, 2021. On Friday, a federal judge temporarily blocked the administration from moving forward with the fund. Blanche told lawmakers behind closed doors that the fund would not pay out money to members of the Trump family or anyone convicted of a violent crime, according to people in the room. But lawmakers

California to impose 100% tax on Trump's January 6 'slush fund,' governor says

California will impose a 100% tax on payments distributed under the Trump administration’s nearly \$1.8 billion fund for victims of alleged “political weaponization,” the state’s Governor Gavin Newsom announced on Wednesday. “One thing I think we’re going to try to do ... is tax 100%. Anyone from California who receives any of those funds, we want to tax 100% of those proceeds and that’s an action the state of California can take,” Newsom said. “It’s an action we look forward to taking.” Jumpstart your morning with the latest legal news delivered straight to your inbox from The Daily Docket newsletter. Sign up here. In a post on social media, the governor’s press office described the \$1.776 billion fund as “a slush fund.” Newsom did not indicate when the state would start imposing the tax. The White House and the Justice Department did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The fund was announced last week as part of U.S. President Donald Trump’s legal settlement with the Internal Revenue Service after he initially sued the agency over his tax returns being leaked to the media. Trump pardoned more than 1,500 January 6 defendants last year. Some have now begun to calculate the cost of their prosecution, jail time and businesses lost in the hope of compensation for what they regard as abuses by the Justice Department under former President Joe Biden. The unprecedented move is already facing a legal challenge by two police officers who defended the U.S. Capitol from rioters on January 6, 2021. Democrats and some Republicans have questioned the legality of the fund, as well as a part of the settlement

want those assurances in writing, along with eligibility requirements, greater congressional control in selecting fund commissioners, and some form of judicial oversight.

“What will dictate the next step is whether or not there are 51 Republican senators who believe that it is a satisfactory outcome,” a senior Republican aide said. “I don’t think every member necessarily is going to find equal satisfaction.” Senate Majority Leader John Thune has called on the Justice Department and the White House to provide clarity to members about what guardrails they will accept. Aides say there has been only silence so far. “The administration appreciated last week’s conversation and feedback,” a White House official said on Friday. “We look forward to additional conversations as needed.” The Justice Department did not respond to Reuters queries seeking comment. Even with restrictions, Republican strategists say the fund could become a political albatross heading into the November midterm elections, where the party already faces headwinds from soaring prices for consumer goods, an unpopular war with Iran and Trump’s declining approval ratings – even among Republicans. “No one thinks this is a winning issue, even those in safe Republican House and Senate seats that don’t usually have to worry about an election. Even those folks want no part of this,” said a Republican strategist who requested anonymity because he is involved in key congressional races. Lawmakers have also shown little appetite to confront the issue after Trump oversaw the primary defeats of Republican Senators John Cornyn and Bill Cassidy. Johnson blamed the Justice Department for making a public announcement about the fund, and doing so just as the Senate was preparing to consider the ICE funding bill. “To me, this whole thing was completely blown by announcing it. These things are better just done using the authority that Congress has given,” Johnson said. “The timing was atrocious.” The controversy has already revived grievances about the 2020 presidential election.

James Troupis, a former Trump campaign attorney who faces felony charges for his alleged role in a false 2020 elector scheme in Wisconsin, applied this week for \$3.2 million in compensation, saying he has lost his reputation and faces \$1.7 million in costs after representing Trump. Vice President JD Vance suggested that former Colorado elections clerk Tina Peters could be a prime candidate for compensation after being convicted of illegally tampering with voting machines in pursuit of false claims that the 2020 election was stolen. DEMANDS FOR OVERSIGHT Some Republicans in the Senate and House of Representatives have called for congressional oversight, echoing comments to reporters by Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley. “Congress needs to have an oversight role in this before I can sign off or support this,” Republican Representative Mike Flood told constituents this week at a town hall meeting in Norfolk, Nebraska. “I have concerns about the weaponization fund,” Representative Mariannette Miller-Meeks, one of the most vulnerable House Republicans, told the Des Moines Register. “We need to know more information. We need to have oversight. We need to know who determines it, where it goes,” the Iowa Republican said. “Right now, I have more questions than I have answers.”



“forever barring” the IRS from auditing past tax claims by Trump, his relatives and his businesses. (The fund) could potentially compensate someone who assaulted a police officer, admitted their guilt, got convicted, got pardoned and now we’re going to pay them for that? That’s absurd,” said Republican Senator Thom Tillis of North Carolina. Jasper Ward is a breaking news reporter in Washington. She primarily covers national affairs and U.S. politics. Jasper was previously based in The Bahamas where she covered the collapse of FTX and the subsequent arrest of its founder Sam Bankman-Fried. She was a part of the Reuters team that won the Gerald Loeb Award for breaking news for its FTX coverage.

US judge temporarily blocks Trump's \$1.8 billion 'weaponization' fund

WASHINGTON, - A U.S. judge on Friday temporarily blocked President Donald Trump’s administration from setting up a nearly \$1.8 billion fund to compensate victims of what Trump has called government “weaponization.” by U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema of the Eastern District of Virginia blocks the Trump administration from “taking any further action” to set up or operate the fund while the judge hears additional legal arguments. The order will remain in effect at least until June 12.

The Reuters Iran Briefing newsletter keeps you informed with the latest developments and analysis of the Iran war. Sign up here. The Justice Department announced the creation of an “Anti-Weaponization Fund” last week as part of an agreement to settle Trump’s lawsuit against the Internal Revenue Service over the leak of his tax records.

It set up a \$1.776 billion fund overseen by a five-member commission to dole out payments to those who show they were victims of “lawfare” and “weaponization,” terms Trump and his allies have used to describe investigations and criminal cases against them. Friday’s ruling came in a lawsuit filed by a group that said it was targeted “by the Trump-Vance administration as ideological or political opponents” and alleged they would be ineligible for payouts from the fund. “This is a victory for transparency, the rule of law, and the American people,” said Skye Perryman, the head of Democracy Forward, the anti-Trump group that brought the lawsuit. “No administration has the authority to spend public money through a political rewards program.”

A Justice Department spokesperson said the department “remains extremely confident in the legality” of the fund. Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche has said there

are no partisan requirements on eligibility for compensation. A general view of the White House as U.S. President Donald Trump’s motorcade returns following a trip to Trump National Golf Club, in Washington, D.C., U.S., July 20, 2025. REUTERS/AI Drago/File Photo Purchase Licensing Rights, opens new tab “We will not allow the policy preferences of judges to interfere with our efforts to provide restitution to victims of lawfare,” the DOJ spokesperson said. The fund spurred a backlash, even from some lawmakers in Trump’s Republican Party, who expressed anger that some people who attacked the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, could receive taxpayer-funded payouts. It was widely derided as a “slush fund” that would reward Trump’s political allies. Democracy Forward’s lawsuit is one of at least three challenging the creation of the fund. Brinkema said the temporary order was necessary to maintain the status quo and prevent funds from being “irreversibly disbursed” before she considered the plaintiffs’ request for a temporary restraining order against the fund. The group suing includes a former DOJ prosecutor who prosecuted January 6 rioters and a California professor who was arrested while protesting an immigration raid. The decision came after the plaintiffs said government lawyers assured them that no money had been moved to the fund, but refused to provide more than 24 hours’ notice before any transfer.

The group said this was “patently insufficient,” and could result in the fund beginning operations before courts determined whether it was legal. The department has not named any of the five commissioners, who are set to be appointed by Blanche. The DOJ said it planned to move money into the fund within 60 days of its announcement

Why eliminating tobacco smoking should be on the agenda of governments



Accelerating the decline in tobacco smoking globally, by decreasing smoking prevalence from current levels to 5% everywhere, could increase life expectancy and prevent millions of premature deaths by 2050, according to a study from the Global Burden of Disease, Injuries and Risk Factors (GBD) Tobacco Forecasting Collaborators published this week in The Lancet Public Health journal. The authors reiterate what experts world over have said for long that speeding up progress towards ending smoking could deliver substantial health benefits to the population. The authors focussed on a scenario for the next three decades.

Based on current trends, the authors find global life expectancy will likely rise to 78.3 years by 2050 – up from 73.6 years in 2022. However, if tobacco smoking were to gradually decline from current levels to a rate of 5% in 2050, this would result in one year of additional life expectancy in males and 0.2 years in females. In a scenario where tobacco smoking was eliminated from 2023 onwards, this could result in up to 1.5 additional years of life expectancy among males and 0.4 years among females in 2050. In both scenarios, millions of premature deaths would also be avoided. Smoking, as has been established, is a leading risk factor for preventable death and ill health globally. While rates of smoking have fallen substantially over the past three decades, the pace of decline varies and has slowed in many

countries. Cancers, ischemic heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) are—and will continue to be—the leading causes of premature deaths from smoking, said the paper. Together, these conditions account for 85% of potentially avoidable years of life lost (YLLs)—a measure of premature deaths. Several countries have set ambitious goals to reduce smoking rates to below 5% in the coming years. However, there is still significant opportunity to expand and strengthen proven policies and interventions to achieve these targets, they pointed out. “We must not lose momentum in efforts to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, smoking around the world. Our findings highlight that millions of premature deaths could be avoided by bringing an end to smoking,” said senior author, Stein Emil Vollset, from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME). The new analysis provides in-depth forecasts of the health burden for 204 countries, categorised by age and sex, from 2022 until 2050. It is the first study to comprehensively forecast the health impacts due to smoking for all countries and all causes, as well as on 365 diseases and injuries. The main measure studied was YLLs or Years of Life Lost, a measure of premature deaths, counting each death by the remaining life expectancy at the age of death. In the scenario in which countries reduce smoking rates to 5% by 2050, there would be 876 million fewer YLLs compared to the most likely future scenario. Life expectancy in 2050 would be 77.1 years in males and 80.8 years in females. The greatest gains in life expectancy among males would be in East Asia, Central Asia, and Southeast Asia, with between 1.2 and 1.8 extra years of life gained. Among females, life expectancy would increase the most in East Asia, High-income North America and Oceania, with between 0.3 and 0.5 additional years gained. For the scenario in which smoking would have ended globally in 2023, the estimates indicate a maximum of 2.04 billion YLLs could be avoided by 2050 compared to the most likely future scenario, and life expectancy in 2050 would be higher still, at 77.6 years for males and 81 years for females. Bottomline: use of tobacco kills and countries must throw in all the resources they have to ensure there is a decline in the prevalence of users.

A war that can have no winners



It’s been a year since Hamas launched its ill-conceived and brazen terrorist attacks on Israel that enabled the group to take scores of hostages but led to a debilitating war. Israel’s disproportionate response to the assault has led to the death of more than 40,000 Palestinians in Gaza, most of them women, children, and the elderly. Israel’s Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been unable to achieve his stated goals of destroying Hamas and bringing all the hostages home. With Israel’s decision to expand the war to Lebanon, apparently, to decapitate Hezbollah and facilitate the return of Israelis who had fled the northern part of the country, concerns about the violence spiralling out of control have grown. Netanyahu, who just a year ago was desperately clinging to power to avoid facing corruption and fraud charges, today enjoys popular backing within his country. But this has come at a tremendous human cost — nearly two million Palestinians have been displaced in Gaza and nearly all of them remain trapped, while one million Lebanese have fled their homes in recent days. Netanyahu’s actions in the West Bank and Gaza have triggered fears that he wishes to leave no room for a two-State solution.

Iran, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen have faced the brunt of Israel’s military might as Netanyahu claims he is destroying an ecosystem of Islamist terror. Israel has the support of the US, from where evidence has emerged of the Biden administration turning a blind eye to Netanyahu’s flagrant human rights violations, but Tel Aviv has lost the propaganda war. The Palestinian cause has received a filip with countries such as Ireland, Norway and Spain voicing support for a two-State solution. The gains and diplomatic wins made through the Abraham Accords lie in tatters and West Asia has been dragged back several decades, with Israel isolated in a hostile region. The United Nations has again been exposed as a toothless body that is a prisoner to the interests of the five permanent members of the Security Council. In India and elsewhere, concerns have increased about the conflict’s impact on oil prices and exports at a time when the global economy remains fragile. Israel’s plan to retaliate against Iran could well tip West Asia past the breaking point. This war must end, and the world must then seriously look at UN reforms to ensure there are mechanisms in place to assert a rules-based order and avert prolonged wars.

When imagination becomes real: How AI is quietly rewriting fashion’s creative rules

A homemaker in her 40s from Punjab, self-taught with a needle and thread after a tailor once quoted her more than she could afford, was scrolling through Pinterest the way she always does, looking for something beautiful to make. She found it: an elaborate gown, detailed and dreamy. She studied it, sourced leftover fabric scraps from her elder daughter’s fashion work, and spent the better part of ten days bringing it to life, stitch by careful stitch, between her household chores. The dress was stunning. The original image, it turned out, had never existed in the physical world. It was AI-generated.

“I had no idea it was AI,” Sunita says. “I just liked the design and thought about it and made it. I will try to make any dress I like, be it AI or not. I just want to bring out the design in its truest sense.” Her daughter Shalu, a 19-year-old content creator, posted the video of her mother’s creation. It spread quickly, not merely as a feel-good moment, but as an almost perfect illustration of something larger quietly happening across fashion: the dissolving boundary between the imagined and the made.

For Delhi-based fashion designer Afsha Noor, who goes by Noor Alchemy on Instagram and creates AI-generated couture and bridal collections, this dissolving line is not a side effect. It is the entire point. “You cannot come inside my head and see what I am imagining,” she says. “What we are doing with AI is imagining out loud.” Noor uses AI at every stage of her process, from concept sketching to presenting finished looks to clients, and says the results have changed how buyers engage with her work. “Till date, whatever clients I have are not able to differentiate between what is real and what is AI. They are able to see what the actual outfit will look like. And this makes them feel confi-

dent in placing an order.” She is emphatic, though, that AI is not the author of her vision. “We treat AI as an assistant. You have a vision, and AI is just helping you. That is it.” Her creative instinct comes first, always, and the technology follows. This distinction matters enormously to Vijay Raj, a visualiser and branding expert based in Kochi with over a decade in advertising, who has watched AI reshape the industry from the inside. “My workflow is that when I get a concept or a brief, I think it through by myself first. After that process, I use AI only for prompting,” he explains. “Otherwise, we are not controlling something; the AI is completely controlling us.” Raj is both an enthusiast and a watchdog. In workshops he conducts at universities, he tells students plainly: “You are completely free to generate anything you want, but as a designer, you have a value to your society and a responsibility to it.” He argues that fashion shares the same ecosystem of trust and misinformation as any other part of society, and designers must take that seriously. Luxury label founder Ranna Gill, trained at FIT New York and a veteran of Donna Karan and Ralph Lauren, sees AI with the measured pragmatism of someone who has watched several revolutions come through the industry. Her studio uses it for early visualization, testing how a colour, print, or embroidery might look before committing to samples, but she is clear about its limits. “AI generates designs, but we still have to recreate it. We rework on it, reposition it, colour it. It is not the final draft,” she says. She draws a longer arc: “When the computer was invented, we learned to use it. We learned to use smartphones. And as we will learn to use AI, we will bring it into our worlds in the ways best for us.” Couture designer Ridhi Mehra, known for blending traditional Indian craft with contemporary silhouettes, echoes this measured view.

After the decapitation of Hizbullah, Iran could race for a nuclear bomb



WHEN AN ISRAELI bomb killed Hassan Nasrallah, the leader of Hizbullah, last week, it did not just decapitate a fearsome militia that has driven some 60,000 Israelis from their homes with frequent rocket attacks. It also dealt a hammer blow to Iran’s “axis of resistance”, a constellation of proxy forces that Iran has for decades used to attack both Israel and Western interests in the Middle East. In addition to its current assault on Hizbullah, Israel’s year-long dismemberment of Hamas in Gaza has vastly diminished Iran’s capacity to cause trouble if threatened. Those defeats, in turn, may be prompting Iran to fall back on its other main form of deterrence: its nuclear-weapons programme.

In recent days, amid Israeli strikes on Hamas, Hizbullah and militants backed by Iran in Yemen, Iranian officials have been insinuating that Israel’s belligerence may induce Iran to develop nuclear weapons. Others have suggested that Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran’s supreme leader, might rescind an earlier fatwa, or religious edict, ruling out the pursuit of nuclear weapons. The regime has been expanding the number and sophistication of centrifuges it uses to purify uranium. It now has a big stockpile of near-weapons-grade material. It is plausible, though not yet likely, that Mr Khamenei might decide that the only way to protect his regime, which is despised by its own citizens and vulnerable to Israeli attack, would be to seek nuclear weapons.

America and Israel have long promised that Iran will not be allowed to build a bomb. Israel, in particular, appears to have detailed intelligence on the progress of Iran’s nuclear programme. If it were to pick up signs that Iran was crossing a threshold, it might well attack Iranian nuclear sites—something it came close to doing in 2011. But there is no guarantee that this would succeed. Israeli insiders, in their more candid moments, acknowledge that the chance to set Iran’s nuclear programme back significantly with air strikes may have passed: the relevant facilities are too deeply buried and nuclear know-how too widely dispersed. Bombing them would set the region ablaze while only delaying the programme by months, some argue.

The first question is, what sort of arsenal would Iran seek? Becoming a country with nuclear arms is more of a spectrum than a single point. Such weapons require three things: a core of fissile material, such as enriched uranium; a warhead that can house the material and initiate a chain reaction that ends in an explosion; and a delivery system, such as a bomb or missile, to transport the warhead to a target. Iran might not make all these things at once. It could produce weapons-grade material without a viable warhead, or it could build a warhead without a suitable delivery system. Iran could also build a complete weapon but, like Israel, refrain from announcing that it had done so. The intention behind such opacity is to reap the deterrent benefits of nuclear arms without incurring all the diplomatic costs. Much would depend on how blatant Iran was. It could build a weapon entirely covertly, on the assumption that deterrence would still be established because foreign intelligence agencies would have some idea of what it was up to. It could signal its intentions more clearly by expelling international inspectors, pulling out of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and renouncing the fatwa. Or it could conduct a nuclear test, guaranteeing that it had a working device and demonstrating its capability to the world, but also inviting international outrage. Whether Iran crossed the nuclear threshold openly or furtively, it would then have to choose how many bombs to build and how to deploy them. It could, like Israel in the 1960s, build just a handful of devices in the hope that sympathetic powers would come to its aid when it was threatened to avert a nuclear war. Iran’s problem is that it has no clear patrons: it is not certain that Russia would step in to save the regime. A second option would be to emulate India. That would involve building a larger, though still modest, arsenal, which could survive an enemy’s first strike, allowing subsequent retaliation. A decade ago many experts and officials thought that the Indian option was Iran’s likeliest course. It would appeal to Iran’s leaders, who could maintain close control over the weapons—as they did with chemical weapons in the past—rather than devolving authority to use them to commanders in the field. In recent years, however, Iran’s calculations may have changed. The military gap with Israel appears to have widened. Worse, the regime is more vulnerable at home, with mounting dissent. It is also becoming bolder militarily, as it showed when it launched missiles at Pakistan in January and Israel in April. An Iran that has decided to build nuclear weapons, perhaps in the aftermath of Mr Khamenei’s death, is one in which the armed forces are probably more powerful, exacerbating these tendencies.

Iran’s emboldened generals may prefer a third option: the Pakistani model, in which they would build a much larger arsenal—hundreds rather than tens of warheads—designed to be used first and early in a conflict to ward off even minor conventional military threats. That might require building small nuclear weapons, dispersing them widely to ensure they could be used in a crisis and delegating the authority to use them to commanders in the field. The choice of posture relates to a second question: how would a nuclear capability shape Iran’s behaviour? In 1981 Kenneth Waltz, a political scientist, published an essay entitled, “The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: More May Be Better”, which argued that countries tended to become more secure and thus more cautious when armed with nuclear weapons. “It’s been proven without exception that whoever gets nuclear weapons behaves with caution and moderation,” Mr Waltz argued years later, with reference to Iran. In 2007 Jacques Chirac, France’s president at the time, was plegmatic about the idea of a nuclear Iran. “What is dangerous about this situation is not the fact of having a nuclear bomb,” he said. “Having one or perhaps a second bomb a little later, well, that’s not very dangerous.”

Many others are horrified by these arguments. Scott Sagan, another political scientist, has offered two counter-arguments. One is the risk that nuclear material might be stolen or sold to terrorists, either by rogue members of the regime or with its blessing. The second is that the weapons might serve as a “nuclear shield”, which would allow Iran to become more aggressive, safe in the knowledge that it could not be attacked in response. That is just what happened with Pakistan, Mr Sagan has argued: the country’s armed forces allowed paramilitary groups and disguised troops to encroach on Indian-controlled territory in 1999, in part because Pakistan’s acquisition of nuclear weapons the year

before had made its top brass more confident. Similarly North Korea, having conducted its first nuclear test in 2006, torpedoed a South Korean ship in 2010. How would these dynamics play out in Iran? It, like Pakistan, has a long history of funding, arming and supporting armed groups to compensate for conventional military weakness and to put pressure on its adversaries, Israel foremost. The regime would not want to share nuclear technology with proxies, as much as some militant groups might like to syphon off some nuclear material via sympathetic members of the Iranian security forces. But it could well decide that the immunity afforded by nukes would allow it to redouble its support for proxy groups and to encourage those groups to intensify pressure on Israel. This issue is not clear-cut, though. Nuclear weapons offer security, but not complete immunity from attack. Argentina invaded the Falkland islands in 1982 despite Britain’s nuclear capability. Iran’s own missile strikes on Israel and Pakistan, both nuclear-armed states, are proof that nuclear shields have holes. Moreover, Pakistan has tended to host Islamist proxies on its own soil—and even then India launched air strikes against them in 2019. Iran has preferred to cultivate foreign groups located far from its borders. So unless Iran extended a nuclear umbrella over Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen—an unlikely prospect, not least because it would require a very large arsenal with sophisticated command and control, capable of surviving multiple rounds of strikes—those groups would still be at the mercy of American and Israeli firepower. That raises the third question: how would others respond to an Iran that had successfully built and deployed nuclear weapons? In the 1960s America contemplated attacking China’s nascent arsenal. It decided against such a risky operation. Today Israeli intelligence has clearly burrowed deep into Iran and, with America, might believe it could locate and strike a site where warheads were being assembled or stored. That in itself could trigger turmoil inside Iran, Iranian retaliation against American bases and Arab states and a wider regional war, perhaps layered on top of existing ones. In practice, the response might be more muted. “Although an Iranian nuclear test would be condemned across the globe and lead to a temporary spike in support for new penalties against Tehran,” says Eric Brewer of the Nuclear Threat Initiative, an advocacy group, “enthusiasm would wane in the subsequent months and years.” Iran is already subject to many sanctions; China and Russia would help insulate it from any more that might follow. And if the arsenal could not be eliminated, Iran’s rivals would turn to deterring its use—as America has sought to do in Asia after North Korea acquired nukes in 2006.

America would probably extend its nuclear umbrella over Saudi Arabia, other Arab allies and Israel, none of which currently enjoy formal guarantees. That step, which would raise many questions—would America, for instance, deploy tactical nuclear weapons to the Middle East, as it does in Europe?—would have two purposes. One would be to persuade Iran that any use of its weapons would risk the destruction of the regime. The other would be to dissuade America’s friends in the region from pursuing nukes of their own. Saudi Arabia has long said that it would respond to the development of an Iranian bomb by making one of its own. Egypt, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) would all be likely to explore such an option, too. That does not mean a nuclear arms-race is inevitable. The UAE wants to cool tensions with Iran and stay away from a regional conflict, not paint a target on its back. Egypt is insolvent and dysfunctional, and is farther from the threat. Jordan is broke. Even Saudi Arabia would probably prefer American protection to the uncertain pursuit of a bomb, which it might only be able to obtain with Pakistan’s help.

Israel faces a different dilemma. Since the 1960s it has been coy about its nukes, saying only that it would not be the first country to “introduce” nuclear weapons to the region. Israel would face strong pressure to reverse that policy, publicly declaring its nuclear status despite the inevitable diplomatic backlash. Israeli leaders might also want to advertise their nuclear capability, by showing off the submarines and missiles that carry the country’s bombs. A nuclear test is another possibility. This would be risky, cautions Richard Nephew of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a think-tank. “If they provided a lot of new information about their alleged weapons programmes, they might even expose weaknesses or deficiencies no one thinks they have,” he says. “Keeping that club in the bag may have much greater deterrence value than brandishing it, since everyone assumes they must have some top-flight stuff.” In any case, the deterrent dynamics between Israel and Iran would be worryingly untested. America and the Soviet Union had worked together as allies for several years before they began their nuclear stand-off. India and Pakistan had well-established backchannels of communication. Israel and Iran have no such history. In the past year their shadow war has turned ever hotter. An Iranian bomb would be a dangerous and unpredictable addition to an already combustible region.

Akshay Kumar is getting Rs. 35-40 crore for ‘Golmaal 5’, here’s what Ajay Devgn’s charging

Mumbai: Bollywood’s very own “Khiladi” Akshay Kumar, who will be seen in the fifth installment of Rohit Shetty’s “Golmaal”, is getting a whopping Rs. 35-40 crore for his 18 to 22-day shoot, which is more than the film’s lead actor Ajay Devgn’s upfront fees.

A source close to IANS knows about the development and went on to share: “Akshay Kumar is shooting for 18-22 days, and he is getting around 35-40 crs, which is more than Ajay Devgn’s upfront fees because he is on a profit-sharing basis.” Rohit had announced “Golmaal 5” on the occasion of his 52nd birthday in March. It was also on the filmmaker’s birthday that news of Akshay being a “surprise package” was revealed. In the BTS moments shared by the director from the sets of the new installment, Akshay’s bald look was unveiled. On April 27, Ajay revealed that the new shoot schedule for the film had commenced. He had also shared a fun video montage from Ooty featuring Arshad Warsi, Tusshar Kapoor, Sharman Joshi, Shreyas Talpade and Kunal Kemmu. The first installment of the Golmaal film series, it stars Ajay Devgn, Tusshar Kapoor, Arshad and Sharman along with Rimi Sen and Paresh Rawal. It is reportedly based on Harsh Shivsharan’s Marathi play Ghar Ghar, which also inspired Vora’s Gujarati play Aflatoun, in turn one of the inspirations for the film. The film was followed by 4 sequels such as Golmaal Returns, which released in 2008, 2010’s Golmaal 3 and Golmaal Again, which hit the silver screen in 2017. All the films starred Ajay, Arshad, Tusshar, Sanjay Mishra, Vrajesh Hirjee and Mukesh Tiwari, with Shreyas Talpade appearing in three, Kunal Khemu and Johnny Lever in two. Akshay is joining the fifth installment.

Women in corporate leadership, the lived reality



Once again, the world will celebrate International Women’s Day on March 8, 2025 and companies will attempt to showcase steps taken toward the inclusion and the increase of women in the workforce. Yet, the lived reality of women in or trying to enter the corporate workforce is starkly different.

The recent instance of rolling back diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programmes in the United States federal government, which also encourages the private sector to end DEI preference hirings, highlights the challenges and the barriers to increasing women’s participation in the workforce. Women, who comprise 48% of corporate America’s workforce, are reeling from the aftershock of this order and are now facing the threat of identity erasure.

It may be easy to brush aside this order as an issue that plagues only the United States. However, the effects of a dip in DEI hirings and women’s exclusion can have severe repercussions in all parts of today’s globally connected world. Regardless of where one is situated globally, conversations relating to the participation of women in the corporate workforce are significant.While DEI may simply be a corporate mechanism to make small inroads into women’s participation in the workforce, especially at an entry level, at present, even such an entry mechanism has not really increased women’s participation in leadership roles. For instance, in India, women have been historically marginalised from the workforce and comprise about 35.9% of the worker population ratio; the number is starker at the senior and middle management levels where women account for only 12.7% leadership roles as of 2024.

It is easy to brush aside DEI as being a fabricated gesture of tokenism, where women placed in companies are viewed as sufferance or an obligation rather than finding a way at the table on their own merit. Of course, while DEI may help women make an in-road into leadership roles in companies and have a semblance of a level playing field, their performance and ability to consolidate their position will depend on their own performance and further normalise the presence of women at all levels of the workforce.Over the past decade, Indian legal mandates can be credited to help increase the presence of women in the corporate workforce especially at the senior level. In 2014, the Companies Act, 2013 mandated that at-least one-woman director should be placed on the board of certain class of public limited companies, and in 2015, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) mandated that at least one independent woman director be appointed to the board of India’s top 1000 listed companies. Thus, it is largely due to a legal mandate that companies are attempting to uphold

best practices of gender diversity The inclusion of women directors on the board of NSE 500 listed companies has increased more than threefold, from 5 % in 2011 to 18% in 2023.

Research across the world finds that organisations also greatly benefit from women in leadership roles. At a fundamental level, the presence of women increases the depth of the talent pool available in the workforce. Women provide informational diversity gained from different educational and career trajectories and distinct social and professional network associations and offer a participative, democratic leadership style that stimulates robust discussion, drives a richer challenge and delivers greater value. Additionally, women tend to focus on relationship building, foster greater stakeholder commitment and assist in formulating strategies that address stakeholder concerns while also overseeing better monitoring, broader human capital management, and communication channels which increase corporate accountability and reduce corporate risks.When companies have more women in senior management and leadership roles, they begin to appear on lists of the most admired and ethical companies, best companies to work for, and best corporate citizens, thereby also serving the agenda of companies from an optics perspective and feeding into a virtuous cycle of benefits.Key identified areas where women leaders bring greater dividends are corporate governance, strategic proposition oversight, risk management, shareholder and stakeholder value, gender and society, and environmental responsibility, all of which are important facets of running an efficient and clean corporate ship which contributes to economic parity.

While token participation of women in companies may be a way out for some companies to demonstrate commitment towards gender diversity in the workplace, women are truly effective corporate leaders when they are given actual power and responsibility and not merely appointed to positions as a token for gender diversity or to serve the agenda of their male benefactors. It is only when a greater number of C-Suite/KMPs (top-level executives in an organisation and Key Managerial Personnel, or KMPs) are women, and, in addition, more independent directors and chairpersons of committees of the board and board committees are women, that they are truly effective corporate leaders. Importantly, the remuneration of women that is at parity with their male counterparts is a key indicator that women’s presence in the corporate workforce is real and robust.While we do have a lot to celebrate on the occasion of Women’s Day this year, it is important to keep in mind that there are still significant steps that companies and regulators must take in order to ensure that women’s participation in the corporate workforce, especially in senior leadership roles, is strong, contributes meaningfully toward corporate governance and is not just a token concept that is aimed at gaining brownie points from stakeholders. Women’s participation in the workforce must be promoted for its many benefits and must not fall victim to the dominant political narrative.End note: The issue of women in the corporate workforce, especially on company boards, is of great significance and merits deep research into various facets. Thought Arbitrage is undertaking such a study which maps the patterns of women on corporate boards by using qualitative and quantitative research methodologies over a 10-year period, involving about 1,000 companies.

What ails pre-clinical PG courses in Karnataka?

There were zero admissions for the post graduate (PG) medical pre-clinical courses in Vydehi Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Centre (VIMS), Bengaluru, including in anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, forensic medicine, microbiology and pharmacology, till the second round of PG-NEET counselling.The institute then informed the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA), the counselling authority in the State, that it would waive the tuition fees for candidates opting for these courses, after which, all the pharmacology seats were filled during the subsequent round of counselling, said Kalpaja D.A., Chairperson of the Institute.This is the situation of PG medical pre-clinical courses in Karnataka, as candidates are hesitant to take them up due to a lack of job opportunities. Even in government medical colleges, only 15% to 20% of the seats in these courses are filled. The situation is far worse in private medical colleges, which have resorted to fee reduction, free hostel facility, stipend as per government guidelines, and job guarantee with good salary as promises to attract students towards pre-clinical and para-clinical courses.

Like VIMS, Oxford Medical College, Hospital and Research Centre has also waived the tuition fees, while BGS Institute of Medical Sciences has promised jobs to candidates immediately after completing the courses.“For PG medical courses, students like to join clinical courses due to job prospects. As a result, despite measures such as fee reduction, free hostel facility and stipend, the enrollment has been poor. It is very difficult to find candidates for courses like anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, forensic medicine, and microbiology. Therefore, many seats in PG medical courses have remained vacant this year as well. The KEA has announced it will conduct a special stray vacancy round for the second time. We hope all the vacant seats will be filled,” Kalpaja explained.“This time, several private medical colleges have announced many facilities, including fee reduction and free hostel facility and others to attract students towards pre-clinical and para-clinical courses. There is no other way to attract students,” said M.K. Ramesh, former Vice Chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS).A large number of postgraduate medical seats remained vacant in the State this year due to the lack of students opting for pre-clinical courses. A total of 3,864 postgraduate medical seats were available in the State for 2024-25. Out of these, 3,379 seats have been filled, and 485 seats remain vacant. Out of these, 471 are PG medical courses, while the remaining 14 are Diplomate of National Board (DNB) courses for in-service doctors.

Among these, most of the seats filled are in clinical courses, while most of the vacant seats are in pre-clinical courses.Out of the total 104 seats available in the MD Anatomy course this year, only six seats have been filled, leaving 98 seats vacant; of the 97 seats in the Physiology, 10 have been filled, leaving 87 vacant. Out of the 99 Biochemistry slots, 12 seats have been filled, and 87 remain vacant. Out of the 114 seats in Pharmacology, only 46 seats have been filled, leaving 68 seats vacant.Further, out of the 116 seats in Microbiology, 48 have been filled, and 68 are vacant, and of 58 seats in Forensic Medicine, only 10 have been filled and 48 remain vacant.On the other hand, almost all the seats in other clinical courses, including MD General Medicine, Radiotherapy, Dermatology, Psychiatry, General



Surgeon have been filled.The statistics of the KEA show students have been showing apathy towards clinical courses even in the past. In 2023-24, only two students were enrolled in the MD Anatomy course across the State. There were 12 students enrolled in Physiology, 7 in Biochemistry, 29 in Pharmacology, 15 in Microbiology, and 22 in Forensic Medicine.In 2022-23, only one student was enrolled in MD Anatomy, and no student enrolled in Physiology, leaving all the seats vacant. Only two students were enrolled in Biochemistry, 20 in Pharmacology, 8 in Microbiology, and two in Forensic Medicine.KEA is the counselling authority to fill the PG medical seats of the state on the basis of PGNEET ranking. This year, a large number of PG medical seats, including clinical, pre-clinical and para-clinical, remained vacant in Karnataka and the country after the mop-up round.Therefore, the NMC reduced the PGNEET cut-off percentage to 15% and allotted seats in the stray vacancy round. However, in this round too, more than 600 PG medical seats remained vacant in Karnataka. In this context, the NMC has again reduced the NEET cut-off percentage to 5% and has ordered to conduct the ‘Special Stay Vacancy Round’ counselling for the fifth time to allocate the remaining PG medical seats.”

This year, the pre-clinical seats are the largest number of unfilled seats among PG medical courses, and the NMC has reduced the PGNEET cut-off percentage and has asked us to conduct another round of counselling to allocate the seats. It has been four months since the PGNEET counselling started, and now the NMC has reduced the cut-off percentage to 5%. Earlier, the NMC had reduced the cut-off percentage to zero. If the PGNEET cut-off percentage had been reduced to 5% earlier, it would have been more beneficial for the candidates, and more people would have opted for the courses. As soon as the NMC admission schedule is released, we will start option entry and allocate all these seats,” said Prasanna.H. Executive Director of KEA.But will this be enough? “I have decided to study clinical courses in PG. I did not get any clinical course seat in the last four rounds of counselling due to my PGNEET ranking. Recently, the cut-off percentage for the special stray vacancy round has been reduced to 5%. So, there is a possibility of getting a seat. If I do not get a PG clinical course seat this time, I will write the PGNEET exam next year as well,” said Abhijit, a PG medical seat aspirant from Bengaluru.Abhijit believes that candidates who have completed MBBS are hesitant to pursue pre-clinical courses in their postgraduate degrees due to a lack of future opportunities.

‘A fraud was committed on the judicial system by completely changing evidence,’ says senior lawyer Shishir Hiray



Senior lawyer Shishir Hiray, who is the Special Public Prosecutor in the Porsche crash case, speaks to Sushant Kulkarni on the challenges in the prosecution of the multifaceted trial and the central point of the case.The prosecution’s case involves a complex set of accused individuals — ranging from the minor being tried before the Juvenile Justice Board (JJB) to 10 adults being prosecuted in regular court, including the minor’s parents, two doctors and a staffer from Sassoon Hospital, two alleged middlemen, and the fathers of the two passengers. Given the wide spectrum of individuals with different roles, what are the key legal and procedural challenges of such a multifaceted prosecution?The basic challenge is how to ensure we have a speedy trial. We are working on the case of the CCL (Child in Conflict with Law) and also prosecuting the 10 accused in regular court and are facing as many number of defence lawyers. These accused are from the higher strata of society and those who have resources. With their resources they all can approach the higher courts and when that happens, it naturally delays the process in the lower court.

This is not a case where straight-jacket evidence is available like it happens in an open-and-shut case. There are a lot of technicalities involved. We will have to examine a wide range of witnesses including technical witnesses — especially for establishing before the court the conspiracy, motives and the act of swapping the blood samples. Chain of events that have taken place, will have to be established through not just the statement of the witnesses but also technical leads. Police investigation includes DNA test, DNA profiling which are comparatively newer branches of the law.All the witnesses in the case are those who have been in subordinate roles to the accused. That is why deposing these witnesses and making sure they do not succumb to any pressures is going to be a big challenge.Investigation officer ACP Ganesh Ingale has stated before the court earlier that witnesses were afraid of coming forward considering the background of the accused.The possibility of the accused pressuring the witnesses will always be there till the time witnesses depose. The accused can use their financial weight, their positions etc.What do you think is the most striking aspect of the probe and the central point of the prosecution’s case?

The central point is that the blood sample of the intoxicated minor was swapped to fabricate evidence suggesting he was not intoxicated. The conspiracy was to then present this fabricated evidence before the court so that

No hardsell for this adman-turned-diplomat Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri

Flanked by two officers, Colonel Sofiya Qureshi and Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, Misri became India’s diplomatic voice during Operation Sindoor. Together, they signalled how in this operation, the military and diplomatic imperatives were in lock-step. For Misri, the message was clear: to ensure that the daily briefing was to the point — embellished with neither frill nor shrill.Not a tall order for a diplomat who began as an adman. Misri joined the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) in 1989, after three years at Lintas India in Mumbai and Contract Advertising in Delhi, where he worked closely with production teams. He would carry the skill of the hardsell to some of the toughest negotiating tables around the world — from China and Myanmar, where he held Ambassadorial stints, to Pakistan, where he was First Secretary during the Agra Summit.

Misri’s batchmates, colleagues and former Ambassadors talk of him as “a thorough professional” and, more significantly, in the me-myself-and-I age of social media, someone “who doesn’t advertise himself”.Foreign Sect.Vikram Misri with Col.Sofiya Qureshi and Wg.Cdr Vyomika Singh during press briefing on Operation Sindoor in new delhi on wednesday.Express photo by Anil Sharma.07.05.2025 Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri with Col Sofiya Qureshi and Wg.Cdr Vyomika Singh during press briefing on Op Sindoor in New Delhi. (Express Photo by Anil Sharma)A senior bureaucrat who has interacted with Misri when he was Ambassador in Myanmar vouches for “another side” — a love for crime thrillers. He recalls a decade-old conversation with Misri in Naypyidaw, where they discussed Dog Day Afternoon, the 1975 Sidney Lumet classic, with Al Pacino in the lead.Growing up in a Kashmiri Pandit family in Srinagar, where he did his early schooling before moving to Udhampur and Gwalior, Misri, colleagues say, rarely speaks about himself at public or private gatherings. A former Ambassador who has known Misri from his early days at the Pakistan desk of the Ministry of External Affairs, says, “He never made it about himself. It was all about his work. That was what kept him engrossed.”That self-effacing side was on display between May 7 and 10, when Misri stayed in touch with the military and worked the lines diplomatically, briefing and debriefing the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) and the office of the National Security Adviser (NSA).

While his composure was noticed by those in the room where he addressed the media, he was sharp on Pakistan’s complicity in cross-border terrorism — one day pulling out a photograph showing slain terrorists getting state funerals and explaining terror targets on a map another day.Operation sindoor Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, centre, with Indian army officer Colonel Sofiya Qureshi, left, and Indian Air Force officer Wing Commander Vyomika Singh, right, address a press conference after India struck multiple sites inside Pakistani controlled territory with missiles under Operation Sindoor, in New Delhi, India, However, his statement on the evening of May 10, when he announced the pause on military action, led to an attack from war-mongering trolls who thought the ceasefire was a retreat on India’s part, some even targeting his daughter. In response, Misri did what people know him for — he didn’t dignify the comments with a public reaction; instead, he simply locked his social media handle.It may have been a rare, uncomfortable moment of media glare for someone who is used to working behind the scenes. In 2001, when the Agra Summit between then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf was organised, a former colleague recalls Misri

the adjudication will happen based on that. This is the most serious part of this case.And this was done not just for the minor driver but also for the two minor co-passengers. Now, to do this, money power was used, bribes were given, samples were swapped, records were forged. This amounted to thwarting the judicial system. When I took over the case, I carefully studied the details of the investigation. I came to a realisation that this was a fraud done with the judicial administration system by completely changing the evidence. And that is what we have brought out in our case.We have submitted that this being a very serious offence, where two young lives were lost, the minor driver should be tried as an adult accused. That application is pending for adjudication.Tell us about the possible timeline of the case in the coming days.If there are no deliberate calculated hurdles created in the case, the charges are expected to be framed in the coming days. From a wider list of witnesses, we plan to examine around 35 witnesses as I see the case right now. A chargesheet has been filed by us against all the accused. The court is yet to frame charges. However, one of the accused, Dr Ajay Taware, has filed his discharge application before a court. And now I am expecting that as a tactic, all these accused will one by one file the discharge applications to prolong the trial. They will make attempts to delay the process.Tell us about the technical evidence. The police had focused on gathering the technical evidence including an AI-based model of the accident.

The technical evidence of that nature is primarily against the CCL in the case of the accident. However, the technical and forensic evidence in the case of swapping of blood samples is also crucial that established the swapping of the blood samples and corruption behind it.Prevention of Corruption Act has been invoked in the case as the government employees from Sassoon Hospital were part of the conspiracy and allegedly took bribes for it. How do you plan to bring that out?So the evidence was tampered with as part of the conspiracy. We have concrete proof from the forensic sciences laboratories. Who swapped it? The doctors of Sassoon Hospital. At whose behest? We have technical evidence to prove that too. The money that exchanged hands has been recovered. We have sufficient evidence to prove the charges of corruption. I have a theoretical argument here. Had even one of the accused involved in the conspiracy acted prudently and lawfully, this offence could not have taken place. It is all of their involvement and connivance which has led to the commission of this offence.Except the accused mother of the CCL, all other accused are currently behind bars. She too was released on bail only on the ground that she is a woman and because there is a specific provision under Section 437 of the Criminal Procedure Code. Under this, even in the case of a serious offence, bail can be granted only on the grounds that an accused is a woman. This bail was not on the grounds of merit. Rather that has been my say on the issue when her bail application was pending before the High Court, the accused took an indirect route to apex court. According to me, they have again played with the judicial administration system here. I am categorically saying they have again played with the system.



putting in late hours.He was then posted as First Secretary at the Indian Mission in Islamabad, and was in India as part of the team overseeing the logistics of the Summit.“He would work late into the night to plan his next day’s work, even after everyone else had called it a day,” recalls the colleague.Misri would go on to take up other challenging assignments. He was India’s Ambassador to China, when the ties between the two countries were impacted following the Galwan clashes in 2020.Despite strained ties between Delhi and Beijing, he was instrumental in the bilateral conversations at the military and diplomatic levels. So in October 2024, when India and China came to an agreement on disengagement of troops, it was Misri who announced it to the world, this time as Foreign Secretary, a position he assumed in July 2024 and will hold till July 2026.Misri also worked on the India-US Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies, while he was Deputy NSA between 2022 and 2024, working closely with NSA Ajit Doval.His colleagues in South Block recall a special gesture he made soon after taking over as Foreign Secretary. In September last year, Misri hosted a dinner to mark the 100th birthday of former Foreign Secretary M K Rasgotra, known in the fraternity as ‘GOAT FS’. Rasgotra was India’s Foreign Secretary between 1982 and 1985.He is also known to enjoy a rapport with Minister S Jaishankar, who, like him, was India’s Ambassador to China before becoming Foreign Secretary. On assuming his office in Beijing in January 2019, the first photograph Misri posted was of the board showing the names of his predecessors, including Jaishankar and Shivshankar Menon.Besides his China experience and on the MEA’s Pakistan desk, Misri has served in various Indian missions in Europe, Africa, Asia and North America. He was on the staff of two External Affairs Ministers (I K Gujral and Pranab Mukherjee), and has worked as Private Secretary for three Prime Ministers — I K Gujral, Manmohan Singh and Narendra ModiMisri’s knowledge of the workings of the PMO, the office of the NSA and the External Affairs Ministry are significant as he now has to implement India’s foreign policy as determined and shaped by the trio in the political-strategic-security establishment — PM Modi, Jaishankar and Doval.As the trio arrived in New Delhi in the early hours of April 23, cutting short their Saudi Arabia visit in the wake of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, it was Misri who received them at the airport, with a crucial briefing on the Pakistani imprint on the attacks, and other leads at that point.Over the next two days, Misri briefed the Ambassadors and the High Commissioners of G20 countries, linking Pakistan-based terror groups to the Pahalgam attack, in which 26 civilians were killed.

Inflation outlook warrants ‘vigilance’, consumption may face headwinds: Finance Ministry report



In its report on Saturday, the finance ministry took note of the divergence between India’s retail and wholesale inflation in April: 3.48% and 8.3%, respectively. In its report on Saturday, the finance ministry took note of the divergence between India’s retail and wholesale inflation in April: 3.48% and 8.3%, respectively. Consumption demand in India may face headwinds in the coming months with economic conditions beginning to show the impact of the conflict in West Asia, the Ministry of Finance said on Saturday, warning that while the near-term outlook is one of “cautious resilience”, policy will need to “remain agile across monetary, fiscal, and structural dimensions” to tackle the ongoing uncertainty and that inflation developments warrant “vigilance”.

“For India, these external pressures are beginning to transmit, selectively but perceptibly, into domestic economic conditions,” the finance ministry said in its Monthly Economic Review report for May, adding that the moderation in core sector growth and fuel consumption “signals that global headwinds are gradually finding their way into select segments of domestic activity.” “With forecasts pointing to a below-normal monsoon and a likely moderation in economic activity, overall consumption demand may face headwinds in the coming months,” it further said. It separately said a significant rainfall deficit along with the current geopolitical conditions could translate into food inflation, weakening rural demand and aggregate growth. According to data released on May 20, growth of India’s eight core industries – namely coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement, and electricity – fell to 1.2% in March and 1.7% in April. Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department on Friday cut its monsoon forecast to 90% of the Long Period Average from 92% projected in April. The latest forecast is the lowest by IMD in the last 20 years. The comments by the finance ministry that policy will need to be “agile” and the inflation outlook warrants vigi-

lance come days before the Reserve Bank of India’s Monetary Policy Committee announces its interest rate decision on June 5. After having cut the policy repo rate by 125 basis points (bps) to 5.25% in 2025, the MPC has left it unchanged so far in 2026 amid sharply higher global energy prices due to the war in West Asia, which has led to foreign investors pulling money out from Indian financial markets to the tune of \$24.2 billion since the conflict began in late February. This has exerted tremendous pressure on the Indian rupee’s exchange rate, pushing it down to multiple all-time lows. Earlier this month, it nearly breached the 97-per-dollar mark, before it was propped up by sustained RBI intervention in the foreign exchange market. On Friday, the rupee ended at 95. It has fallen 4.2% since the war started.

While the rupee has recovered some ground in recent days, economists warn that the MPC may have to increase interest rates as early as next week. According to Standard Chartered Bank economists, the RBI may raise the repo rate by 50 bps over its June and August meetings. And they see a risk of additional 25-50 bps of hikes in 2026-27 if inflation turns out to be higher than expected due to continued pressure from commodity prices and a weak rupee. In its report on Saturday, the finance ministry took note of the divergence between India’s retail and wholesale inflation in April: 3.48% and 8.3%, respectively. This wedge, it said, is a sign that upstream cost pressures are building and the passthrough to consumers may not be far behind.

“The recent hike in petrol and diesel prices may activate both direct and indirect transmission channels, and any further escalation in energy prices could narrow the existing cushion more quickly than anticipated. A deficient monsoon could add food price pressures on top of energy-driven ones. However, second-round effects and their persistence must be evident in the data for policy responses to be triggered,” the finance ministry said. After holding retail fuel prices at for over two-and-a-half months amid the surge in global rates due to the West Asia crisis, public sector oil marketing companies have raised pump prices of petrol and diesel by over Rs 7 per litre in less than two weeks. The RBI, in early April, forecast that headline retail inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) may average 4.6% in 2026-27, up from less than 2% in 2025-26. However, economists from outside the central bank see CPI inflation averaging more than 5%. Central banks in Asia have already begun raising interest rates, including Indonesia by 50 bps and Sri Lanka by 100 bps – both in one go – in the last 10 days.

Government asks oil companies to build 30-day LPG reserves amid Hormuz supply risks

The liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) supply squeeze due to the West Asia war has underscored the requirement to have more LPG storage in the country, and the government has asked public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs)—Indian Oil, Bharat Petroleum, Hindustan Petroleum—to work on a plan to have at LPG reserves to meet at least 30 days of demand in addition to their regular commercial stocks.

“We are working on the strategic reserves. Oil marketing companies have been asked to work out (a plan) to have LPG reserves for a minimum of 30 days with them, and they are working on it,” Petroleum Ministry Joint Secretary Sujata Sharma said Friday. Speaking to reporters, Sharma said that the proposal is still at an early stage and declined to comment on a timeline for these reserves to be created. Whether this additional storage will be in underground caverns—as in the case of strategic crude oil reserves—or in overground tankage will also be worked out by the OMCs depending on the cost considerations and feasibility. The move to expand storage capacity for LPG, which is used as a cooking fuel by over 33 crore Indian households, comes as LPG has been the most impacted energy segment due to the West Asia war and the consequent closure of the Strait of Hormuz. While India has strategic petroleum reserves for crude oil, it has none for LPG and liquefied natural gas (LNG). A bulk of the available stocks for crude oil also are commercial stocks with refiners.

India depends on imports to meet about 60% of its LPG consumption, and a whopping 90% of those imports came via the Strait of Hormuz. This means that the Strait of Hormuz effectively saw the movement of around 54% of India’s LPG consumption. In the case of LNG imports, on which India depends to meet half of its natural gas requirement, the Strait accounted for 55-60% of the supplies. As for crude oil, about 40% came through the shipping corridor. The disruption has forced India to ration LPG supplies to industrial and commercial consumers in a bid to prioritise crores of households that depend on the fuel to run their kitchens. As a demand management tool, the minimum gap between LPG refill bookings by households has also been increased. India’s LPG consumption stood at about 90,000 tonnes a day before the war. But with the disruption in flows through the Strait of Hormuz and seasonal dip in demand, LPG consumption has declined to about 72,000 tonnes a day, according to Petroleum Ministry estimates.

Moreover, domestic refineries have been maximising domestic LPG production to partly offset the loss in imports,



and refiners are scrambling for LPG cargoes from alternative geographies like the US, Australia, and Russia, among others. Through diplomatic efforts, India has also managed to get a number of its LPG tankers stuck in the Persian Gulf. Domestic LPG production currently stands at about 50,000-52,000 tonnes a day, which is meeting 70% of the domestic demand, up from 40% before the war. India’s LPG imports dropped sharply in March and April amid the crisis, halving from the average import volumes for most of the financial year 2025-26, ship tracking data shows. In the first 11 months of 2025-26—April-February—India’s LPG imports averaged at about 2 million tonnes a month, according to vessel tracking data from commodity market analytics firm Kpler. In March, LPG imports crashed to 1.1 million tonnes, and dropped further to 0.95 million tonnes in April. With the West Asia war exposing the risks of having thin emergency energy buffers, the government and industry stakeholders are now looking at creating additional storage for LPG and LNG, and expanding the capacity of the crude oil stockpiles that can be used during extended energy supply disruptions. Early May, Petronet LNG CEO AK Singh had said that plans were being worked out to build additional storage tanks for LNG in order to have a robust buffer to shield the country from future disruptions. With the persistent uncertainty and lack of clarity on when vessel movements through the Strait of Hormuz would return to the pre-war normal, India’s LPG supply challenge is far from over with supply tightness likely to continue for the foreseeable future. The Strait of Hormuz—the narrow waterway between Iran and Oman—is the key maritime chokepoint through which a sizable chunk of global petroleum flows usually pass. The war in West Asia began with the US-Israeli strikes on Iran on February 28. Vessel movements through the Strait have crashed and reduced to a trickle since then—to fewer than 10 a day from 130-140 before the war erupted.

Government dials fund managers for gig workers’ safety net

Government dials fund managers, gig workers safety net, gig workers safety, gig workers, labour ministry, Indian express business, business news, current affairs About the e-Shram portal, Pednekar said that it already has the database of aggregators and “we can understand, on a real-time basis, the benefits which the worker can or has availed”.

The Central government is consulting fund managers to bring social security schemes for gig workers, a labour ministry official said on Friday, about a month after several parts of north India witnessed protests demanding a minimum wage while citing rapidly rising cost of living. “A huge part of our workforce is now getting absorbed in the gig and platform economy, and the potential is immense. Today, around 1 crore workers are employed in this sector, and the potential is to reach around 2.5 crore workers by the end of the decade. The government is focusing more towards this sector,” Ashutosh AT Pednekar, Joint Secretary and Director General (Labour Welfare), said. He said that the government is in the process of operationalising various social security schemes related to accident and maternity for platform workers. “We are in the process of creating various schemes and engaging with several fund

managers to ensure the schemes are operationalised,” Pednekar said. He also said that the Code on Social Security rules under the new labour code has already been notified on May 8. “We are in the process of operationalising the Code, based on the rules through various mechanisms like the National Social Security Board for gig and platform workers, which is being operationalised. The board will look at unorganised workers,” he said. According to Eternal’s (Zomato and Blinkit’s parent company) Q3FY25 shareholder letter, average monthly earnings for delivery workers of Zomato and Blinkit who logged in at least eight hours a day and 26 days a month were Rs 27,726 in 2024, excluding fuel costs (which is a big expense for workers who drive hundreds of kilometres a day). However, Eternal’s then-CEO Deepinder Goyal had said that in 2025, the average delivery worker on Zomato worked just 38 days in the year and 7 hours per working day. Though he said that reflects the gig-style nature of the job, workers say that those types of average earnings are only possible when they do 10-14 hour shifts. Besides, much of the earnings are tied to incentives that companies offer workers for meeting certain targets

Inside Jasleen Royal’s sea-facing Mumbai duplex: Piano, ‘sunset’ studio, vintage accents



Singer-composer Jasleen Royal recently gave a tour of her stunning sea-facing duplex in Mumbai. The Heeriye vocalist explained the significance of decorative items and how her home reflects her musical persona and creativity in an episode of Gate Crash by Mashable India. Designed with neutral tones and vintage accents, the home carries a minimal yet eclectic aesthetic. Royal described the living room as one of the most neutral sections of the house, sharing that she enjoys blending different styles and adding subtle vintage elements throughout the decor. She also shared that she occasionally introduces seasonal pops of colour. One of the highlights of the luxury home is a grand piano beside a large ocean-facing window, which serves as the living room’s centrepiece. The singer explained that the spot often becomes her creative space, where she practises while watching the sunrise or sunset and jams whenever she experiences a creative block.

Another sentimental corner of the house is a wall adorned with photographs and personal keepsakes. Speaking about her connection to family traditions, Royal recalled her childhood love for kite flying and shared that she continues the ritual every Lohri by flying kites for her parents.

Chic bar area, family wall The singer also showcased a dedicated bar area, which she said was designed more for hosting guests than for drinking. Calling herself a typical Punjabi host, she explained that she enjoys feeding, pampering, and entertaining friends and family. The bar seamlessly opens into a cosy dining area often used for

gatherings. Further, she also spoke about her emotional comfort rituals, revealing that chai and buttered toast remain her go-to comfort food whenever she feels overwhelmed or emotionally low. Her music studio emerged as the most personal part of the home. Designed to feel comforting and intimate, the space houses multiple guitars, a recording setup, a writing corner, and a cosy chair where she enjoys her coffee breaks. The studio also features an altar dedicated to her guru, Yogananda ji, reflecting her spiritual connection to Kriya Yoga. Shelves in the room display books, photographs of her grandparents, and her Filmfare Awards trophy for Ranjha. Royal shared that learning she was the first woman to win in the Music Composer category made the achievement especially meaningful for her. Bedroom with neutral hues Upstairs, the guest room has been designed as a warm space for friends and family, complete with soft seating and sunset views. Next up, her bedroom features an entirely white and neutral palette. Royal explained that she intentionally avoided colour in the room to create a calming environment that allows her mind to slow down and feel peaceful. The room also opens to a spacious balcony with a comfortable seating area and a table, against the backdrop of the sea. Neha Kataria, Creative Director, The Right Address & Interior Designer, LA Archplan, explained how curated elements like old furniture, musical instruments, or handwritten notes help create a space that feels emotionally lived-in rather than overly styled. “Curated objects work the way memory works. They accumulate over time,” she said, adding that, “Interior styling is ultimately a human exercise. It is about shaping spaces around the lives and memories of the people within them. The most memorable homes are the ones that feel deeply specific to the person living there.” Neha Raina, Design Propeller and Associate Partner of Studio IAAD, shared that one of the biggest decor shifts in modern homes is feeling more grounded and less performative. She explained that natural elements like stone, lime plaster, wood, handcraft finishes are now preferred more by homeowners. “We are also seeing traditional elements being reinterpreted in contemporary ways, with handcrafted decor and cultural accents being integrated into modern spaces. Homes are becoming softer and increasingly centred around authenticity,” Raina said.

Quality of your sleep may be affecting the liver too — here’s how

Poor sleep may be doing far more damage to the body than simply causing fatigue and low energy levels. According to new research published in the Endocrine Society’s Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism, unhealthy sleep habits and sedentary lifestyles may significantly increase the risk of developing fatty liver disease, one of the world’s most common chronic liver conditions. The condition currently affects nearly a quarter of the adult population globally and has traditionally been linked to obesity, diabetes, poor diet, and lack of exercise. “People with poor nighttime sleep and prolonged daytime napping have the highest risk for developing fatty liver disease,” said Yan Liu, Ph.D., of the Guangdong Provincial Key Laboratory of Food, Nutrition and Health and Sun Yat-sen University in Guangzhou, China. “Our study found a moderate improvement in sleep quality was related to a 29% reduction in the risk for fatty liver disease.”

According to Dr Amit Miglani, Director and HOD, Gastroenterology at Asian Hospital, growing scientific evidence suggests that sleep is becoming just as important as diet and physical activity for metabolic health. “More and more research is showing that lack of sleep could have a severely negative impact on liver functionality, similar to the impact of poor dietary choices and physical inactivity,” Dr Miglani explained.

He said inadequate sleep disrupts the body’s ability to metabolise energy efficiently. “When you have an improper sleep schedule, it affects how the body processes fat, regulates insulin, and manages energy metabolism. Over time, this can contribute to fat buildup in the liver,” he said. Sleep for metabolic health “Sleep is now being recognised as one of the three main components of metabolic health, alongside nutrition and exercise,” Dr Miglani said. He explained that chronic sleep deprivation increases stress hormone production, which can interfere with blood sugar regulation and metabolic balance. “Lack of sleep also influences appetite control and may increase unhealthy eating behaviours,” he added. “When combined with prolonged sitting and low physical activity, this creates significant metabolic stress, even in people who are not severely overweight.” One of the study’s most striking findings was that even moderate improvements in sleep quality were linked to a nearly 29% lower risk of fatty liver disease. According to Dr Miglani, improving sleep habits can genuinely



support liver recovery, especially in the early stages of disease. “One of the most effective ways to improve early-stage fatty liver disease is through positive lifestyle modifications, and quality sleep is a major part of that,” he explained. He said restorative sleep helps regulate inflammation, hormones, and insulin function — all of which directly influence liver health.

“Sleep alone may not completely reverse liver damage, but developing healthy and consistent sleep habits can significantly support the healing process,” Dr Miglani noted.

Are long daytime naps a warning sign?

While many people rely on daytime naps to compensate for poor nighttime sleep, experts warn that excessive napping may actually signal deeper metabolic imbalance. “Short naps can be refreshing, but very long or frequent daytime naps may indicate poor sleep quality and disrupted body rhythms,” Dr Miglani said. “Naps cannot replace deep, continuous nighttime sleep when it comes to overall metabolic and liver health,” he emphasised. As modern lifestyles become increasingly sedentary and sleep-deprived, doctors warn that fatty liver disease may continue rising even among younger adults and people without obvious obesity. “The body’s metabolic systems are deeply interconnected,” Dr Miglani said. “Improving sleep, reducing inactivity, eating better, and maintaining regular physical movement together create the strongest protection for long-term liver health.” With growing evidence linking sleep and liver disease, experts believe prioritising quality rest may no longer be optional, but an essential part of preventing chronic illness.

Jaw pain and nausea together? Why doctors say it needs immediate attention

Jaw pain is more likely to make most people think of a dental problem than a heart emergency. Nausea, meanwhile, may be blamed on something you ate. But when the two show up together, especially suddenly, doctors say they should not always be brushed off. According to Dr Sushant Chhabra, Cluster Head, Emergency Medicine, Manipal Hospitals North-West Region, heart attacks do not always present with the dramatic, crushing chest pain many people expect. “Sometimes the warning signs can be subtle, such as jaw pain, nausea, sweating, breathlessness, unusual fatigue, dizziness, acidity-like discomfort, or pain going to the shoulder, arm, neck, or back,” he tells indianexpress.com.

Why can a heart attack cause jaw pain?

heart attack Jaw pain with nausea should be taken seriously, especially if sudden or accompanied by sweating, breathlessness, or chest discomfort (Image: Freepik) It comes down to something called referred pain. Dr Chhabra explains that the heart and nearby areas such as the jaw, neck, shoulders, and arms share interconnected nerve pathways. So when blood flow to the heart is reduced, the brain may interpret those pain signals as coming from somewhere else. That is why some people may feel discomfort in the jaw instead of classic chest pain. If that jaw pain appears alongside nausea, sweating, or breathlessness, doctors say it should be taken far more seriously than a routine dental or digestive complaint. Interestingly, these atypical symptoms are often seen more commonly in women, older adults, and people with diabetes.

When should jaw pain raise concern?

Not every aching jaw signals heart trouble. But sud-



den, unexplained jaw pain — especially when paired with nausea, sweating, breathlessness, dizziness, unusual fatigue, or chest heaviness — deserves attention. “Persistent or unusual jaw pain without an obvious dental cause should not be ignored, particularly in individuals with heart disease risk factors,” says Dr Chhabra. People above 40, smokers, those with diabetes, hypertension, high cholesterol, or a family history of heart disease should be especially cautious. While left-sided jaw pain is more often associated with heart-related causes, doctors say heart attack-related jaw pain can happen on either side — or even both.

Could it just be acidity or a dental issue?

heart attack These symptoms are often more common in women, older adults and people with diabetes (Image: Freepik) Sometimes, yes. Acidity typically causes burning, burping, or a sour taste, while dental pain may feel localised and linked to chewing, swelling, or a clear oral issue. Heart-related discomfort, however, may feel more like pressure, heaviness, tightness, or unexplained uneasiness — and often comes with symptoms like sweating, nausea,

Vicky Kaushal’s 5 most defining performances



It was 2018. I was in 12th grade, yet more than the anxiety of board exams, I found myself celebrating a year that belonged to Vicky Kaushal. A year earlier, Rajkummar Rao had a similar breakout moment, but it was nowhere near the sweep that Kaushal had. Five films in a single year, each distinct, each a testament to a talent long in waiting. On one hand, he nearly stole Sanju from Ranbir Kapoor, edged past Alia Bhatt in Raazi; on the other, he became the perfect third point in the restless geometry of Manmarziyaan, while carrying lead moments with certain charm in Love Per Square Foot and Lust Stories. Fate, it seemed, was keeping pace. Uri: The Surgical Strike would follow the very next year, a box-office triumph destined in the stars.Since then, he has known the valleys alongside the peaks. At times, he has inhabited propagandist cinema, yielding returns as certain as they are vast but also very much troubling the social ethos. At others, he has become the voice of conscience in The Great Indian Family, and in between, he has simply entertained, elevating yet another Raju Hirani caricature in Dunki. Today, as he turns thirty-eight, it is worth tracing the arc of his defining performances. In an industry increasingly dominated by Singhs and Kapoors, with Aryans, Raos, and Khurranas jostling for space, Kaushal reminds us that there is always room for a presence that surprises, that unsettles, and that eventually, has the last laugh.

A boy in love. A lower-caste youth haunted by the boundaries society has drawn around him. Much has been said about Kaushal’s breakout performance in Neeraj Ghaywan’s Masaan. Much more will be said in the years to come. “Ye dukh kahe khatam nahi hota bey?” became a meme for a generation, devoid of its raw reality. But Deepak’s grief was never just a line; it was embedded in the very grammar of first love. The thrill of spotting your crush on Facebook, the nervous anticipation of sending a friend request, the simple joys of hanging out in melas, the delicate awkwardness of picking a gift, the fleeting ecstasy of glimpsing her in a crowd, the shy poetry of gestures that speak louder than words. These small, soaring moments very much defined his existence. Thus, then the most unforgettable moment comes when he flies a balloon across the square, hoping she will notice, much later, only to discover her lifeless body through the ring she wore. It is a brutal awakening. Deepak comes of age before he is even asked for it. A portrait of a boy forced, mercilessly, to be-

come a man.A man-child. A lost lover. Confusion is the lifeblood of Anurag Kashyap’s Manmarziyaan, where Kaushal inhabits one vertex of a love triangle that is kinetic yet anxious, elated yet turbulent. DJ Vicky Sandhu could have easily been an archetype, a cliché of commitment-phobia. In fact, in other hands, the character might have well collapsed into villainy or worse juvenile folly. But in Kaushal’s grasp, he is laden with empathy, burdened by the struggle to reconcile desire with fear. In his hands, he becomes a consciousness trapped in its own indecision. His arc insists on the interiority of a man incapable of bridging the gap between longing and action. Thus, in its most affecting moment, right at the interval mark, where Rumi (Taapsee Pannu), waits for him, and he comes. But he cannot summon the courage to take her away. Music swells, tears well, and in his eyes is captured a generation of lovers suspended between letting go and holding on. A portrait of a man casting off his childish ways.A brooding, corrupt cop. A son slowly sinking into silence. Kaushal inhabits the darkest recesses of Kashyap’s Raman Raghav 2.0, a serial killer thriller that the world hailed for Nawazuddin Siddiqui’s stupendous portrayal of Raman. But it is, in truth, Raghav, through Kaushal’s tormented lens, who forms the film’s fulcrum. The film was never a study of a killer’s psyche. It was always a story of unspooling, of a cop descending through layers of moral decay, of a consciousness eroding. It insists upon this from its very first frame, as it announces, rather loudly, that it is not about Raman, but about Raghav, the image in which Raman’s chaos is reflected and completed. Thus, its most searing moment arrives when Raghav confronts himself in the mirror, the reflection he cannot escape, after his partner has shown him the magnitude of his own desolation. A portrait of a man in absolute freefall.A shy army officer discovering love. A husband caught between duty and devotion. Meghna Gulzar’s Raazi was, above all, always, a love story: not necessarily about allegiance to the nation, but about two star-crossed lovers bound by circumstance. Alia Bhatt commands the screen as Sehmat, yet it is Kaushal’s Iqbal who forms the film’s moral axis. The tragedy of the story would lose all its weight if the “enemy” were not Iqbal, a man whose humanity complicates every choice. Kaushal, who was still a year away from Uri: The Surgical Strike, did something blasphemous for fans of the blockbuster: he humanized a Pakistani soldier. In that sense, the film becomes a marriage story of its own kind. Notice the first time Iqbal sees Sehmat, their first conversation, their first kiss. Notice how he gives her space, how he respects her privacy even as she silently wields it against him. Notice how he plays Hindustani classical music upon learning it is part of her upbringing. Notice how, through these gestures, he sheds posturing and patriotism. Thus, the most heartbreaking moment arrives in the climax, when in his attempt to save her, he loses himself instead. A portrait of a soldier lost to love.A revolutionary determined to make a difference. A man whose pursuit of justice refuses to be tainted by vengeance. It is fitting that Kaushal gave his career’s most luminous performance in a film, (Shoojit Sircar’s finest work), where shades of all his past formidable roles converge. The brooding fury of Raghav, the ache of separation like Deepak, the restless yearning of Vicky, the tender innocence of Iqbal, all find some sort of resonance in Udhm Singh. Yet the greatness lies not in synthesis alone, but in Kaushal’s embodiment of acting as reaction rather than performance. For much of the film’s near three-hour span, he traverses the globe for a cause he believes in. It’s nearly a dialogue-less performance, where his rage does all the talking. The angry young man is realised in its purest form. And the only time when he is really alive is when he is in love. The adolescent smitten, the man tender in his romance. Thus, its most devastating moment comes as he enters the suite of a massacre to save his beloved, only to be overwhelmed by the magnitude of death, forgetting she lies among the fallen.

Aamir Khan refutes ghost directing claims: ‘If I was directing, why would I put someone else’s name?’

Aamir Khan may be considered Bollywood’s “Mr Perfectionist” today, but when he first began his acting career, things were far from perfect. Competing with his contemporaries, the actor ended up signing more than nine films at once. However, the decision backfired. After the blockbuster success of Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak, almost every film he starred in failed at the box office, leading to him being labelled a “one-film wonder.” It was then that Aamir decided to completely change his approach and started choosing his films with more caution, eventually, he started doing one film at a time, which transformed his career. He went on to deliver acclaimed films such as Dil Hai Ki Manta Nahin, Jo Jeeta Wohi Sikandar, Rangeela, Raja Hindustani among many others. Lagaan, Rang De Basanti, 3 Idiots, Dangal, and many others followed. However, with many successes in the bag and his eye for perfection, many started suspecting that Aamir was the decision maker on his films, and was ghost directing them, which basically means that he wasn’t letting the actual director make decisions for the films. Now at 61, Aamir Khan has firmly denied such claims.

‘I have only directed one film’Speaking at the Screen Academy, the actor said, “First you have to realise that in all the films I have done in these 38 years, I have directed only one film — Taare Zameen Par. All the other films are not directed by me, no matter how much y’all have been fed by the media.”He further added, “The media has constantly claimed that I ghost-direct films. My point is — why will I do that? If I am doing a great job, why on earth will I put someone else’s name? Pagal kutte ne kata hai mujhe? What nonsense? It has been my privilege to work with directors who are extremely talented and from whom I have learnt so much.”Aamir explained that every filmmaker he has worked with brought a unique energy to their projects. “If I was directing all my films, then each one of them would have looked the same. They would carry the same spirit and energy, but they don’t. Lagaan is completely different from Rang De Basanti, which is different from Sarfarosh and 3 Idiots. Each director brought their own vision and personality into the film.”The actor also stressed that the credit for those films belongs equally to the writers, directors and the entire team involved. “People credit me for the direction and scripts when I have done none of that. I did not write Talaash, Rang De Basanti or Taare Zameen Par. I simply heard these stories, connected with them and wanted to be a part of them,” he said.



Aamir added that a film belongs equally to everyone associated with it. “As a member of the team, I have contributed just like the 20 others working on the film. I am one of the people involved in the process.”Filmmaking is very difficult!The actor also addressed how even unconventional stories in his filmography have often found a wide audience. “All of us want our films to reach the maximum number of people. Nobody plans to make a film for a limited audience. Some people are simply better at understanding audiences than others. Filmmaking is very difficult, and very few people consistently deliver successful films.”However, Aamir admitted that he does have certain strengths. “I have been fortunate. I am not being modest — I do believe I have certain abilities. But filmmaking is complicated because so many things are beyond your control. You have to accept that and enjoy the process. That unpredictability is part of the charm. Sometimes, too much control is not good for you.”When Aamir Khan decided to be careful about his films

Previously, while reflecting on the difficult phase after QSQT, Aamir had shared, “After QSQT, I wasn’t happy with the work I was doing. My sensibilities didn’t match with the people I was working with. Eventually, those films started releasing. Three films flopped and I was labelled a one-film wonder. And the films that were yet to release — I knew how bad they were.”He added, “I felt completely sunk. I thought my career was going down the drain. I used to come home and cry every evening. I swore that I would never compromise again unless I trusted the script, director and producer — even if it meant the end of my career. I felt like I was stuck in quicksand.”Aamir Khan is producing Lahore 1947, directed by Rajkumar Santoshi, which stars Sunny Deol in the lead role. He also recently shared that he is working on a sequel of 3 Idiots.

‘Never read a script in my entire life’: Salman Khan says he’s written scripts, but never read them



Salman Khan, who has often been the subject of intense trolling for his unconventional script choices and perceived minimal effort in acting, recently revealed that he has never actually read a script in his entire life.‘Never read a script in my entire life’In a clip released by Variety India on Instagram, he shared,“I have never read a script in my entire life. I have written them, but I have never read them.”To those unaware, Salman has writing credits for films like Baaghi, Veer and Dabangg 3.In the same clip, he also said, “You see me wearing watches; that doesn’t mean that those watches are mine. Either it belongs to one friend or another.”Last-minute changes to the script of SikandarSalman Khan recently made a special cameo appearance in Ritesh Deshmukh’s Raja Shivaji, but his last full-length role was in AR Murugadoss’s Sikandar, which turned out to be a major box office disappointment. After the film flopped, the filmmaker spoke candidly about the challenges of working with the superstar, him arriving late for shoots, and particularly regarding last-minute

changes to the script.Speaking on Valaipechu Voice, Murugadoss said, “It’s not easy to shoot with a star. Even day scenes, we had to shoot at night because he turned up to sets only by 8 PM. We are people who are used to shooting from early mornings, but that’s not how things work there. On top of that, multiple people used to suggest a lot of spot changes on the set in the script.”Sikandar’s plot was goodSalman, known for his candid responses, addressed these comments during an episode of Bigg Boss. The conversation began when comedian Ravi Gupta, appearing as a guest on the show, asked Salman to name the movies he regrets doing. He said, “Nayi mein se koi nahi hai. . . log kehte hain Sikandar par main nahi manta, uska plot bahut acha tha.” (I don’t regret doing any film in recent times. People do say it could be Sikandar, but I don’t believe that. The plot of the film was good.)

He then added a pointed comment about the production, saying, “Lekin kya hai na, main set pe raat ke 9 baje pahuchta tha, toh usme gadbad ho gayi. Meri pasaliyan tooti thi, isne jo hamare director (AR Murugadoss) sahab hain unhone ye kaha. Lekin unki picture (Madharaasi) abhi ek release hui hai jisme actor 6 baje pahuchta tha.” (I used to arrive on sets by 9 PM, and that created issues. This is what the director said. My rib was broken. Recently, another picture of his was released, and the actor of the film used to reach the set by 6 PM.)Taking a subtle dig at Madharaasi’s box office performance, he added, “Madharaasi karke picture unhone direct ki hai jo ki release hui, bahut badi film hai aur utni hi badi. . .(smiles), Sikandar se badi blockbuster.” (He has directed a film called Madharaasi. It is a very big film and an even bigger blockbuster than Sikandar.)Salman Khan will next be seen in Maatrubhumi: May War Rest in Peace and has also started filming his upcoming action project with Vamshi Paidipally and producer Dil Raju.

Karuppu box office collection day 1: Suriya-Trisha film lags behind Retro and Thug Life, earns Rs 14.4 cr



Karuppu box office collection day 1: After much anticipation, coupled with a delay, the Tamil-language action film Karuppu, directed by RJ Balaji, finally released this Friday. As per trade tracker Sacnilk, Karuppu, starring Suriya and Trisha Krishnan, received a fairly decent response at the box office. On its opening day, the film earned a net of Rs 14.4 crore, with a gross collection of Rs 16.66 crore. The film’s overseas collections stood at Rs 4 crore, taking its worldwide gross to Rs 20.66 crore.Breaking down the earnings by language, out of the Rs 14.4 crore net, the film earned the majority from the Tamil version, which contributed Rs 12 crore, while the Telugu version accounted for Rs 2.4 crore. Across 4,891 shows on day one, the overall Tamil occupancy was 50.35%. Morning shows started at 24.54%, increased to 45.92% in the afternoon, jumped further to 53.31% in the evening, and ended the day at 75.15% during night

shows. Region-wise, Chennai had the highest number of shows at 592, with an occupancy of 70.5%, while Bengaluru had 367 shows and a lower occupancy of 38.5%. The overall Telugu occupancy on the first day was 28.28%.

While Karuppu has opened well, it falls short compared to Suriya’s previous release, Retro, which opened with Rs 19.25 crore, and his period actioner Kanguva, which had a massive opening of Rs 24 crore net. For Trisha as well, the film lags behind her last major release, Mani Ratnam’s Thug Life, which earned Rs 15.5 crore, and Good Bad Ugly with Ajith Kumar, which opened to Rs 29.25 crore.However, the film has performed better than the current highest-grossing Tamil film of the year, Parasakthi, which opened at Rs 12.5 crore on Pongal weekend. However, Parasakthi earned Rs 27 crore worldwide on opening day. It has also trailed behind several other major Tamil releases from last few years like Kuberaa (Rs 14.75 crore), The Greatest of All Time (Rs 44 crore), and Amaran (Rs 21.4 crore) The coming weekend will be crucial in determining whether the film can maintain momentum and end the three-day period on a strong note.Karuppu was previously scheduled to release on Thursday, May 14, however, hours before the release, the director and producer shared that the film was facing some troubles and they were trying their best to solve the problem so it could reach the audience. It was reported that the problems appeared because of unpaid dues of Rs 10 crore. While at first, only the morning shows were cancelled, but later in the day, it became clear that the film would not see the light of the day until all issues were resolved. This happened days after Chief Minister Vijay gave special permission for the morning 9 am shows. The issue was later resolved and the film was released on Friday, May 15.

Dear Owen Hunt, you were Grey’s Anatomy’s most hated character and you earned it

You walked into Seattle Grace in Grey’s Anatomy Season 5 carrying the kind of damage that felt earned. A soldier. A trauma surgeon. A man shaped by war trying to re-enter a life. The PTSD was not backstory, it was the centre of who you were, and for a while, it made you genuinely worth watching.That version of you had promise. And then, almost immediately, you started being you.Now that you have packed your bags and boarded a flight to Paris — with Teddy, because of course with Teddy — it feels like the right moment to say some things plainly. Not in anger. Just in the interest of honesty, which was never really your strong suit. Because for seventeen seasons, you managed something that very few characters on this show pulled off — you made an entire audience root against you. Not because you were written as a villain. But because you were written as a man who genuinely believed he was the most reasonable person in every room, and consistently proved otherwise.She told you she did not want children. She told you this before the wedding, during the marriage, in therapy, in the firehouse, across operating tables. She said it clearly and without ambiguity, in every setting a person can occupy. And you heard her every time. You just kept waiting for a version of her that was never going to arrive.That is not love.That is a relationship with someone you have not quite accepted.

When she became pregnant and chose to have an abortion, you went with her. You held her hand. For a moment, it seemed like you understood that her body and her future were hers to decide — that loving someone sometimes means accepting what they want even when it breaks your heart. And then, at Zola’s birthday party, surrounded by colleagues and friends, you turned to your wife and screamed that she had killed your baby.She had told you who she was from the beginning. The abortion was not a betrayal. It was Cristina being exactly who she had always said she was. The screaming was you, finally admitting you had never really accepted it.Then came the cheating, which you later admitted was punishment. The man who held her hand at the clinic had, within a season, turned that gesture into a debt she owed you. She threw cereal at you. Given everything, it was a restrained response.

As Chief of Surgery, you put six colleagues on a charter flight with a documented history of mechanical problems. Lexie Grey died in a field. Mark Sloan died weeks later. Arizona Robbins lost her leg. The Callie-Arizona marriage,

one of the most resilient relationships the show ever built, eventually came apart under the weight of what that crash did to them.You felt guilty about it. The guilt was real. But you had a particular way of grieving that kept you at the centre of the tragedy, while the people who had actually lost limbs and partners were left to put themselves back together.Amelia Shepherd was not a problem for you to diagnose.By the time you got to Amelia, a pattern had become visible enough that the audience was watching with something close to dread. When she told you she was not sure she wanted children with you, your response was to suggest her feelings were not real, that it was the brain tumour talking, not the person. You located her personhood in a medical diagnosis because it was easier than accepting that another woman was telling you, plainly, that she did not want what you wanted.A still from Grey’s Anatomy. A still from Grey’s Anatomy.When she ended things, you told her there was some fundamental part of her that could not love or be loved. You said that to a woman in recovery. Someone who had spent years fighting to come back to herself. She called it a moment of clarity. She was right. You loved her. She loved you. And rather than do anything honest with that, you spent years keeping her close enough to hold without ever fully choosing her. When she was finally pregnant with your child and began seeing someone else, you were jealous and controlling — while you were still with Amelia. You treated her love like something that would simply be there when you needed it, without requiring much tending in the meantime. By the time you finally committed to her, so much had accumulated that the relationship was already carrying more than most could hold. She forgave you things that were genuinely hard to forgive. That was always more about Teddy’s capacity than your deserving.

By the time Season 19 arrived and the story of the veterans came out, that you had been illegally providing physician-assisted deaths to soldiers who were suffering, the show asked us to understand it as a complicated act of compassion. And perhaps it was, somewhere underneath. You genuinely cared about those men and women. That was never really in question.But you dragged Teddy into it. You put her career, her freedom, her life at risk for a decision you made largely alone. And when it collapsed, the two of you fled Seattle like fugitives, leaving behind the hospital, the colleagues. Which is, in its way, very you. Leaving town with a woman who has spent her adult life absorbing the aftershocks of your decisions that you made without her.